Author:
O'Brien, Stephen Gerard Michael

Title:
The impact of New Labour's educational vision : a case study of secondary teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda.

The Impact of New Labour's Educational Vision - a case study of secondary teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda

by

Stephen O'Brien

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Graduate School of Education.

July 2001

79,855

The Impact of New Labour's Educational Vision - a case study of secondary teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda

by

Stephen O'Brien

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Graduate School of Education.

July 2001

79,855

Abstract

This study investigates teachers' and their managers' views of the impact of New Labour's educational change programme within one English secondary school. This change programme is understood in terms of a so-called 'raising standards' agenda which comprises of a numerous set of policy initiatives aimed at the reconstruction of school culture. The theoretical implications of this agenda for teachers' self-identity, professional practice and cultural working relationships are shown to be significant. Specifically, in line with New Labour's managerialist focus on school and teacher 'effectiveness', three important changes to teachers' work culture are identified. They are described as the 'intensification', 'proletarianization' and, what I call, the 'unreality' theses. The research findings confirm the relevance of these themes in transforming teachers' work culture, though they also question some conceptual assumptions within each strand and further connect all three as an integrative force for change. Teachers' own perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda also reveal the fact that change can never be seen as absolute, since teachers still retain some form of 'relative autonomy' in the professional determination of their work. Moreover, new empirical insights highlight the unique, complex, and sometimes contradictory responses of teachers to the 'raising standards' agenda. In recognising these points, the study nevertheless concludes that *all* teachers are significantly affected (albeit to varying degrees) by recent change. Further, it is claimed that, while teachers *in principle* may welcome the 'raising standards' agenda, they have substantial concerns about its conception, implementation, and outcome values. The political value of the study is thus manifest in its critical capacity to identify these concerns and consequently evoke the need for policy-makers to rethink their views and strategies on 'raising standards'.

Dedication

For my parents who taught me the value of education

Preface And Acknowledgements

The phenomenon of change has become a regular feature of 'global' educational systems as we enter into the twenty-first Century. Within the UK secondary school context, in which this work is set, change has been both persistent and extensive. Wave after wave of reform initiatives have re-shaped both the focus of schooling and the culture of teaching in England and Wales. While much has been written about the effects of reform on the purposes of schooling, studies dedicated to the investigation of the impact of such changes on teachers' perceptions have been scant by comparison. From both a theoretical and an empirical perspective, this work attempts to address this problem and, in doing so, wishes to highlight the central importance of *teachers' perceptions* within a critical appraisal of such change.

There are few who would doubt that teachers' opinions about their own practice are important. However, in reality, their views have been overlooked all too frequently by the urgent attention to reform. As A. Hargreaves notes:

> *"individually, we know what many of the changes in teachers' work are. Collectively, we are much less certain about what they mean"* (1994a, p14 - his emphases).

Given this problem, a logical and important step in its illumination lies with asking teachers themselves what the nature of change has meant to them. If we accept that teachers' thoughts, beliefs and actions are interconnected and that they ultimately affect the kinds of learning young people get (A Hargreaves, 1999), then this enquiry into teachers' perceptions should be central to any 'raising standards' agenda. The reality of the current agenda, however, is that there are serious constraining structures

within which teachers operate and which obviate against such a proposed enquiry. This work addresses this issue, and in so doing, presents a realistic (and not unduly optimistic) picture of teacher empowerment.

The study presented is for all those who are interested in education. In particular, for policy-makers, parents, and researchers there is the opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers as professionals, since it is largely accepted that what teachers do is strongly influenced by what and how they think (Clark and Peterson: 1986, Shavelson and Steen:1981). Further, the theoretical and methodological considerations of this study resonate well for scholars currently engaged in educational research. Above all, however, this study is for teachers. Specifically, it is hoped that:

a) the analysis and discussions presented proffer an opportunity for teachers to reflect upon the ways in which their practice is socially constructed
b) *teachers'* own perceptions of change will be advanced
c) teachers 'outside' of this study may identify with some of the views and concerns of those practitioners highlighted 'within'

From a political perspective, this study may be seen as a direct research response to present policy trends which frequently remove the teacher from a critical appraisal of reform and thus risk alienating the very individuals who are central to 'raising standards' plans.

Throughout this work teachers are regarded as 'human beings', not 'disembodied intelligences' or 'instructing machines' (Waller, 1965), and the act of teaching is

viewed upon separately and apart from post hoc and predictive measures such as student achievement. It is accepted that such views on teachers represent a particular theoretical value-system. Within this construct I am aware of the danger of overstating (perhaps romanticising) the importance of teachers' individual views and needs. However, while it is acknowledged that teachers do not possess absolute truths, it is strongly argued that, within the contemporary context, 'official' truths now need to be questioned in the light of teachers' immanent views and needs.

My thanks are due to the many people who have helped me over the years of research covered by this work. Very special thanks go to Agnes McMahon for her unerring support and expert academic guidance. I would also like to thank my other colleagues in the CPMS (Centre for Policy and Management Studies) at the Graduate School of Education for their keen knowledge and insight into this work. They include: Alfredo Gomes, Timothy Rudd, Susan Robertson, Roger Dale, Alex Patramanis, Mario Novelli, Keith Holmes, and Leon Tikly. Particular mention goes to Sally Power, Geoff Whitty, and Ken Jones, too, for their encouragement of my early formulations on New Labour's educational policy. Likewise, I am very grateful to Ray Bolam for earlier commentary on my work. For any shortcomings in the final product, I assume full responsibility. I would also like to acknowledge the enormous assistance of the University support staff throughout the period of this research - special mention goes to Jan, Jacqui, Gabrielle, CJ, Tommy, Bob, and all the library staff for their kind support and good cheer. Expressed gratitude as well to the staff (especially Norman) of Lee Valley School for being so professional and for giving up their valuable time to be engaged in this research project. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the worthy contribution of those important people outside of the workplace. Throughout the

years I have been fortunate to receive the personal support and love of many dear friends. I remain forever grateful to you Orla. To Sean, Gary, Niall, John, Paula, Lewis, Francimar, Bibi, Kerry, Claire, Hala, Brid, and all the gang in room G22a, I also extend my warmest appreciation.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: ..... DATE: 09/05/01

The Impact of New Labour's Educational Vision – a case study of secondary teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda

Contents

List of Figures and Tables

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALIS – A-Level Information System

Anon – Anonymous (relevant code for chapters Seven-Nine inclusive)

AST – Advanced Skills Teachers

ATL – Association of Teachers and Lecturers

CAME – Cognitive Acceleration in Maths Education

CASE – Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education

CATs – Cognitive Abilities Tests

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

CTC – City Technology College

DES – Department of Education and Science

DfEE – Department of Education and Employment

DHA – Deputy Head for Assessment

DHC – Deputy Head for Curriculum

EAZ – Education Action Zone

EPA – Education Priority Area

ERA – Education Reform Act

ERO – Education Review Office (New Zealand)

ERT – Edinburgh Reading Tests

FAS – Funding Agency for Schools

GCSE – General Certificate in Secondary Education

GM – Grant Maintained

GTC – General Teaching Council

HMSO – Her Majesty's Stationery Office

HoD – Head of Department

HoY – Head of Year

HRO – High Reliability Organisation

HRS – High Reliability Schools

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

IEP – Individual Educational Plan

IIP – Investors In People

INSET – Inservice Educational Training

Int – Interview (relevant code for chapters Seven-Nine inclusive)

IT – Information Technology

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

LEA – Local Education Authority

LMS – Local Management of Schools

MEP – Maths Enrichment Programme

NAHT – National Association of Head Teachers

NASUWT – National Association of the Secondary Union of Women Teachers

NPQH – National Professional Qualification for Headteachers

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

NUT – National Union of Teachers

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education

PE – Physical Education

PGCE – Post-Graduate Certificate in Education

PRP – Performance Related Pay

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

RE – Religious Education

SATs – Standard Attainment Targets

SDP – School Development Plan

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator

SEU – Standards and Effectiveness Unit

SMT – Senior Management Team

STRB – School Teachers' Review Body

TCI – Technology College Initiative

TES – Times Educational Supplement

TTA – Teacher Training Agency

UDC – Urban Development Corporation

YELLIS – Year Eleven Information System

Chapter One: Introduction

Context

After a lengthy term in the shadow of Conservative rule, the first of May 1997 heralded in a *new* New Labour government. To many at the time (including myself) this date seemed to represent the beginning of a new epoch in British politics. Certainly, New Labour had been acutely aware of such public opinion and has since often promoted itself as a unique 'modern' approach to politics. Now at the end of its first period in office, New Labour is open to critical judgement on this representation. In particular, we are now in a better position to adjudge the popular claim that 'education, education and education' is indeed at the centre of its policy agenda. This study puts New Labour's educational vision to the test by critically focusing on its 'raising standards' policy and its declared central aim of improving both 'the quality of teaching and learning' in schools (DfEE, 1997a). In outlining New Labour's educational policy, and its concomitant attention to 'standards', this work begins by examining two main questions: a) *what's new about New Labour?* and b) *what are the effects of its educational policy on the nature and purpose of schooling?* It is claimed here that the exploration of these enquiries helps to strip away the veneer of political populist discourse in order to get at the heart of the impact of New Labour's commitment to education.

In line with such an exploration, New Labour's educational vision is examined in relation to recent intense market developments in education. The legacy of Conservative thought is shown to be continually influential both in the formulation and

implementation of contemporary educational policy. This is particularly evident in relation to the increased monitoring and evaluation role of quasi-government agencies (such as Ofsted and the Standards Effectiveness Unit), the 'intensification' of teachers' work, and the strong focus on 'standards' in schools. It is concluded that, within New Labour's educational approach, there is an underlying market ideology which is adapted from the legacy of neo-Liberalism and which incorporates notions of 'choice', 'competition' and 'diversity' (O'Brien, 1998). Of course other global, political and ideological factors exist which significantly shape New Labour's educational vision and these are duly examined in this work. Hence, having set the background context in which 'raising standards' is located, this study intends to explore its impact at institutional and individual teacher levels.

Aims

This work is about secondary teachers, their managers and changes to the school workplace. It seeks to connect large-scale transformations at global economic and political levels to the everyday cultural processes of secondary schoolwork. Specifically, New Labour's promotion of a so-called 'raising standards' agenda is explored in relation to its significant effects on the organisational practices of one English secondary school. In tandem with this analysis, the research sets out to investigate *teachers' perceptions* of 'raising standards' in respect of such affective changes to their work culture - this is the principal aim of the study.

In attempting to investigate teachers' perceptions of the transformative force of 'raising standards', specific research questions are posed. They are:

1. *How does the case study school respond to the challenges of the 'raising standards' agenda?*
2. *What does the 'raising standards' agenda mean to teachers in this setting?*
3. *How do teachers perceive their role in the promotion of the 'raising standards' agenda?*
4. *What are teachers' perceptions of the impact of 'raising standards' on their own everyday practice and on their cultural working relationships within school?*
5. *What are teachers' concerns about the 'raising standards' agenda?*
6. *What are teachers' perceptions of observed changes to notions of self-identity, professional practice and cultural working relationships?*

In order to address these questions (which are predominantly focused on teachers' perceptions), this work adopts a qualitative research approach. Documentary analysis is employed in relation to the interpretation of relevant school, as well as political, documents. Fourteen teachers form the research sample group in the case study school: the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, four Heads of Departments, two pastoral Heads, and six mainscale classroom teachers. A questionnaire study explores these teachers' initial responses to the 'raising standards' agenda. Extensive use is then made of semi-structured interviews in an attempt to ascertain teachers' meaningful subjective accounts of change events. A *critical policy* research approach plays a crucial methodological role in this study. Not only does it aim to deconstruct taken-for-granted assumptions about the 'raising standards' agenda but it is also instrumental in shaping a dialectical relationship between the theoretical substance of this study and its empirical analysis (see Chapter Five for a more comprehensive treatment of this study's research methodology).

The work presented here draws upon a number of relevant fields of knowledge. They are:

a) critical policy literature

b) empirical studies on the nature of the teacher's job, pedagogy and learning, and theories of education

c) school effectiveness and school improvement literature

d) research methodology literature

Both the theoretical discussions and the empirical data are located within these scholarly domains.

Why is this work important?

Five reasons are proffered in response to this question. Firstly, this work stands alongside a modest number of studies which attempt to link recent global transformations in the world economy (and associative educational policy changes[1]) with the micro context of the cultural work of secondary teachers. In particular, this study can claim to be important on the grounds that it focuses upon teachers' own perceptions of cultural change in schools. The research, therefore, stands in contrast to the majority of other studies on the effects of global or political transformations, most of which have been located within large-scale corporations or manufacturing

[1] The effects of New Labour's policy of 'raising standards' on teachers is examined over the period of the government's first term in office i.e. from May 1st 1997 to June 7th 2001.

industries (Menter et al, 1997), and has given little attention to workers' perceptions of change events[2].

The study also provides an appraisal of empirical studies related to labour process theory. For example, in relation to the proposition that 'raising standards' is part of the 'intensification' process (see Chapter Four), the research presented substantiated existing claims that teachers are indeed under enormous stress and are continually faced with increasing demands on their job. The study presented also critiques school effectiveness and school improvement perspectives which remain integral to the 'standards' agenda. The emerging appraisal induces a critical policy analysis of New Labour's interpretation of existing studies within this field.

As well as proffering an important contribution to existing scholarship and promoting the opportunity for the appraisal of established empirical results, the research study is significant for three further reasons:

1. It serves to critically analyse contemporary educational policy and practice, specifically in relation to the 'standards' agenda. The critical-dialectical relationship between its empirical data and theoretical treatise links discussions on contemporary issues in educational policy and practice with an appraisal of the impact of change at institutional and individual levels
2. This study outlines the theoretical and practical implications of a contemporary 'raising standards' policy for a) the 'cultural' work of the teacher and b) the focus of schooling. In this way, it actively engages with existing scholarship on the nature

[2] It is accepted, however, that this 'other' work can be useful in theoretically interpreting some parallel effects within a teaching context.

of education and teachers' work, and proffers a critique of popular politicised models of school and teacher 'effectiveness'

3. Finally, this study highlights the necessity to incorporate teachers' perceptions and concerns within any proposed 'raising standards' agenda. This may serve to indicate an alternative direction for future policy or emphasise failings within existing provisions. In addition, the importance of taking teachers' perceptions seriously is justified according to the following three reasons[3]: firstly, it is recognised that teachers' behaviour will always be largely determined by their attitudes, beliefs and values; secondly, it is believed that teachers are better placed than any other professional group to enhance the quality of pedagogy in their school - hence, their views must be heard; and, finally it is important to highlight that there are both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions to the 'raising standards' agenda - in this way, the 'raising standards' *process*, which relies on the active engagement of teachers, needs to be examined alongside its outcome objectives

What is meant by 'raising standards'?

The main question of this study enquires: *what are teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda?* Before we attempt to illuminate this, it is important to explicate an understanding of the key concept of 'raising standards'. In the early stages of the research it soon became clear to me that this concept had different meanings for different individuals. In the questionnaire (see chapter Six), for example, the teacher sample group were asked what 'standards' meant to them. Some common responses were recorded but, in the main, definitions varied substantially: some

[3] It is accepted that these three reasons constitute a particular theoretical value position.

teachers viewed 'standards' in an academic sense; others associated the term with general notions of 'responsibility', 'social awareness', 'potential', and 'opportunity'; others still, couched 'standards' in moralistic terms, defining it as acceptable levels of 'courtesy', 'appearance', 'attitude', and 'behaviour'; while some were just not sure about the meaning of the phrase. Hence, it became obvious that, if I was to enquire about teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda in the subsequent interviews, I would have to make explicit the meaning of the concept for reliability and validity purposes.

This study, therefore, separates two significant meanings for the concept *raising standards*. The first is a *personal/professional*[4] interpretation based on an assumed a-priori professional characteristic which always affects teachers' self-identity, attitudes, and behaviour in school and in the classroom (i.e. 'all teachers engage in 'raising standards' by virtue of their professional status - their duty is always to ensure, as far as possible, that their students do well in all spheres of school life'). Within this interpretation, how they engage in 'raising standards' is significantly associated, in part, with how their '*personal* self' (Nias: 1989, my emphasis) relates to their professional identity. The second meaning relates to a *policy agenda* which acts as an 'affective' force on teachers' attitudes and behaviour in school and in the classroom. It is expressed in such terms as: 'governmental and institutional pressure in formulating and implementing a 'raising standards' agenda affects teachers' everyday practice, particularly in terms of both their attitudes and teaching'.

---

[4] The phrase 'personal/professional' is used throughout this study and relates to the view that teachers' personal and professional responses to the 'raising standards' agenda cannot be seen in mutually exclusive terms.

This study makes extensive use of the second meaning, while still recognising the value of the first one throughout. Hence, the investigation focuses more upon the effects of a 'raising standards' *policy agenda* on teachers' perceptions. This agenda is clearly specified in relation to the plethora of initiatives which are supported by New Labour (see **Appendix I**)[5]. Such initiatives are promoted on the rationale that both the quality of teaching and learning is improved as a direct result of their adoption in schools (DfEE, 1997a). The study scrutinises this claim and, taking these initiatives as a whole, examines teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' concept. In this way, the study reports teachers' reactions to a macro structuralist definition of 'raising standards'. Personal/professional interpretations of the concept cannot be ignored, however, as these may represent a fundamental part of teachers' practice, and may act as an important rationale for the possible resistance to 'official' policy definitions.

As used in this study, the concept of *perceptions* refers simply to the attitudes, values and beliefs which teachers possess in response to the need to raise 'standards'. In line with discussions given here on 'raising standards', separate <u>emphases</u> may be advanced for the meaning of *perceptions*. Firstly, the concept may be thought of in personal/professional terms as attitudes, values and beliefs which shape how teachers view themselves in the job and which help to determine what they do in their everyday practice. Secondly, perceptions may be seen in the light of teachers' attitudes, values and beliefs which have been moulded by perceived changes to notions of self identity, professional practice, and cultural working relationships. It is this study's intention to utilise both meanings of the concept in order to develop a more comprehensive

---

[5] Note: the theoretical framework of this study, which adopts a critical policy analysis approach (see chapter Five), emphasises the fact that the abstract concept of 'raising standards' is made concrete not just in terms of a descriptive set of initiatives, but in terms of "the underlying relations of production which are obscured by the non-critical notion of the term" (Harvey: 1990, p21).

appraisal of teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda. However, it is recognised that *perceptions* described in the latter 'reactive' mode furnish a greater insight into the pervasive influences of an affective 'raising standards' policy agenda.

Content and organisation

This work, then, examines how the 'raising standards' agenda has impacted upon school organisational life and the cultural work of teachers. The theoretical treatise of this investigation is complemented by the empirical focus on teachers' own perceptions of such a change phenomenon.

The work is divided into five parts. Part One (chapters One and Two) explores the relevance and background of this study. In particular, chapter Two sets out the contemporary policy context for the study. Here, discourse analysis is employed as a means of stripping away the veneer of political populism to establish a more critical enquiry into current educational policy. The influence of a select number of individual 'visionaries' is recognised and the promotion of 'modernisation' principles is highlighted as a significant source of legitimation for *New* Labour. As well as pointing to the more innovative features of New Labour's educational approach, this enquiry examines policy continuities from the past which call into question a so-called 'new identity' approach. Such continuities highlight a significant tension in political identity as some Old Labour beliefs are acknowledged alongside New Labour principles. This is particularly exhibited in relation to the contested role of state intervention in educational policy and practice, whereby considerable anxiety is manifest between a modernist/Fordist viewpoint of mass education and the alternative vision of a post-

modernist/post-Fordist system of competitive schooling. Here, social democratic value-systems are shown to be assimilated with the acceptance of an underlying competitive ideology which is largely derived from the legacy of Conservative thought. The resultant 'commonsense' doctrine represents a so-called 'third way' approach to politics (Giddens, 1998). Hence, educational policy and practice is said to reflect both economic and social democratic value-systems. While such a synthesis approach is often presented in a favourable and unproblematic light, a more critical appraisal reveals a significant unresolved tension between both value systems. In particular it is shown that such a tension derives from a positive discrimination towards the economic dimension within a so-called 'alliance' of values (O'Brien, 1999). In policy practice, New Labour's underlying idea, use and conceptual understanding of the term 'standards' is shown to have subsequent implications for both the nature and focus of schooling, as the rationale for a new 'raising standards' agenda is formed.

In Part Two (chapters Three and Four), New Labour's educational policy is analysed further by means of a wider theoretical treatise on the 'standards' issue. Chapter Three begins by investigating the regulatory and ideological power of the contemporary state. Here, it is claimed that the main vehicle in promoting the 'raising standards' agenda is New Labour's use of, what I call, an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness. Such an 'authoritative' model is explained according to the following three features: a) there is an overriding concern for 'school effects' i.e. 'effectiveness' is intrinsically linked to school 'improvement' and cultural change, b) the model is managerialist in its orientation and promotes a principal faith in systems-based change and leadership, and c) the model is normative - prescriptive in its presentation and acritical in its application. Promotion of an 'authoritative' school

effectiveness model is extended not just in regulatory terms (through an advancement of systems-based change), but also in ideological terms (through an enhancement of particular value-systems and beliefs). Significantly, then, this model represents a political/social force which legitimates particular managerialist forms of school and teacher effectiveness. Its primary goal is to shape new formal organisational practices in schools.

The resultant reshaping has significant effects on the culture of teaching. Here, chapter Four examines an 'authoritative' view of *pedagogical* effectiveness whereby teachers are faced with fundamental shifts in their cultural practice. From a theoretical perspective, three conceptual changes to teachers' work are outlined which are claimed to be representative of this process of cultural change. These conceptual changes are described in terms of the 'intensification', 'proletarianization' and, what I call, the 'unreality' of teachers' work. Acting as an integrative force, they are posited as having profound effects on teachers' perceptions. It is accepted, however, that any change to teachers' perceptions cannot be solely explained in terms of fundamental cultural shifts. Instead, such change may be personal/biographical - rooted, for example, in a teacher's reply to students' fluid needs or in a response to improve the quality of his/her instruction. Such changes in perceptions thus extend beyond structural processes that transform working culture. Having said that, it is claimed that the three conceptual cultural changes presented in this work may be utilised to explain a *significant* impact upon teachers' perceptions. The relevance of this theoretical analysis is manifest, then, in its development towards a useful set of propositions which help inform the research questions of this study, and illuminate some practical explanations from the collected data. It is important to note, however, that the

discussions presented in chapter Four *are* theoretical in nature and should be seen to act as a heuristic in promoting an enquiry into teachers' perceptions of change.

Chapter Five (which constitutes Part Three of this work) begins by setting out the theoretical framework and research methodology used in this study. The research design is described in detail, highlighting the inter-connectedness between research aims, questions, and methods. A description of the teacher sample group and the research in operation is then given and there are also discussions relating to the study's ethical commitments and its analytical process. The chapter concludes by considering a brief analysis of research limitations.

Chapters Six-Nine deal with the primary research data and constitute Part Four of this study. Specifically, chapter Six details documentary, participatory observation and questionnaire data in an attempt to paint a clear picture of the case study school under investigation. In relation to the overall research design, this chapter sets out to examine the specific question: *how does this case study school respond to the challenges of the 'raising standards' agenda?* The analysis presented here also points to the meaning teachers attach to this agenda within the case study school, and traces how they perceive their role in the promotion of 'raising standards'. Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine detail the effects of the three main transformations to teachers' work culture. Specifically, chapter Seven outlines the 'intensification' effects of the 'raising standards' agenda on teachers' work practice. Here, it is shown that the 'raising standards' agenda is affective in three significant areas - namely, in relation to workload, role accountability, and time demands. The impact of these intensified demands on teachers' work highlights a number of negative features in contemporary

teaching and, in particular, draws attention to some ill effects on teachers' self-identity. Chapter Eight then reveals that, in promoting the 'raising standards' agenda, New Labour concurrently endorses a new set of professional 'responsibilities' in teaching. These new 'responsibilities' have a significant (and predominantly negative) impact on the ways in which teachers feel they can control their own work. The concept of 'proletarianization' is utilised in this chapter as a significant theoretical tool for understanding teachers' diminished capacity for control. This phenomenon is shown to be particularly manifest in teachers' classroom work and their social relations in the job.

Chapter Nine then sets out the third major transformation in teachers' work culture, highlighting the emergence of a new 'unreality' in teaching. Three themes are identified as exhibiting this 'unreality' phenomenon. The first questions the substantial claims of the *raising standards for all* assumption, the second draws on the disparity between *theory and practice* (with specific reference to the arrangement and functioning of 'raising standards' initiatives in school), and the third shows how the concept of *image management* emerges as schools and teachers are increasingly compelled to adopt an 'effective' self-presentation in response to change.

The final chapter of this work (Part Five) addresses the 'product' of the investigation into teachers' perceptions and reviews details about the aims, findings, and theoretical elaboration of the study. It concludes by highlighting the implications of this work for various interested parties, including: policy-makers, practitioners, parents, and researchers. While no concrete description of an alternative direction for a future 'raising standards' policy is proffered, the critical possibilities for such action are

inferred. This reflects the political value of the study which remains committed to using its research results to provide the best possibilities for further insight and understanding into the 'raising standards' debate.

It is hoped, by the end of this work, that the impact of New Labour's educational 'vision' may become more apparent. Here, the challenge is to stress that what is in fact seen or promoted as given 'effects' may indeed be reconstructed differently in the minds and actions of teachers. Thus, the impact of the 'raising standards' agenda is examined from the teachers' perspective, as this study investigates *their* perceptions in an attempt to understand and explain the real contemporary issues which face the profession.

Chapter Two: New Labour's Theory of Education - locating the 'raising standards' agenda

Introduction

Almost two decades of Conservative rule had thoroughly transformed the education system through an invariable series of sweeping market reforms. The Labour Manifesto in 1997 signalled the views and proposed action of a government in waiting. What was presented was a palpable appreciation of an emergent 'modern' world which paved the way for a renewed interest in education. There was clear indication, too, that any expectation to expunge all the previous government's reforms was misguided:

> *"Some things the Conservatives got right. We will not change them. It is where they got things wrong that we will make change"* (Labour Party, 1997, p3).

Judgements, relating to any proposed acceptance or rejection of previous reforms, would be made in accordance with New Labour's particular 'vision' for education in this country. This 'vision' incorporated strong market principles. However, while it was claimed that any intended acceptance of market reforms represented an innovative *New* Labour, a firm emphasis on old social democratic principles of equality and justice was still espoused:

> *"Our values are the same: the equal worth of all, with no one cast aside; fairness and justice within strong communities. But we have liberated these values from outdated dogma or doctrine, and we have applied these values to the modern world"* (Labour Party: 1997, pp2,3).

It is a moot point whether New Labour have, to date, successfully managed to reconcile the strong tension between market and social justice principles in educational policy and practice. It is also questionable whether social democratic values are *significantly* represented within New Labour's theory of education.

This chapter attempts to illuminate these points. Section One begins by asking *what's new about New Labour?* Such a discussion then leads to a detailed account of New Labour's theory of education which is referred to here as *centralist progressivism* (section Two). It is shown that this theory of education is informed by an interpretation of the alliance between economic and social democratic ideals. Such an alliance of values is presented by New Labour as a 'commonsense' approach which is largely legitimated on ideological grounds by the contemporaneous demands of a so-called 'modern' world. Section Three locates the rationale for New Labour's 'raising standards' agenda within such a theory of education. Also, New Labour's conceptual use of the term 'standards' is examined and, subsequently, a critique is presented which draws into question the unproblematic and *progressive* image associated with the 'raising standards' agenda. Specifically, the central tension between economic and social democratic ideals is highlighted as the main source for much of the inconsistency in 'standards' policy provision.

Section One: What's new about New Labour?

New Labour's 'vision' is:

> *"a Britain equipped to prosper in a global economy of technological change; with a modern welfare state; its politics more accountable; and confident of its place in the world"* (Labour Party: 1997, p3).

The implication here is that New Labour is adopting policies appropriate to *new* world conditions. While few writers would doubt some transformation from a period of 'modernity' towards so-called 'postmodernity', most are divided on the nature and extent of such a transformation (Brown et al: 1997, Brown and Lauder: 1996, Kumar: 1988, Pieterse: 1995). Others, however, support the perception of a radical transformation in the world leading to new inter-relationships between the capitalist economy, the state, institutions, and individuals (Reich: 1991, Held: 1989, R Robertson: 1991, 1995, Kenway: 1992, Usher and Edwards: 1994, among others). This proposed reconstruction promotes a transmutable representation of the world ("vague is vogue" - Tyack, 1990), and renders images associated with stability as obsolete. While the validity and/or the extent of a new era of postmodernity remains far from clear, it is generally accepted that, within the political, economic and cultural spheres, some form of transformation has transpired or, at least, is underway (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998). There is also a general agreement that the role of the nation state is in a process of change (Bates: 1992, Hobsbawm: 1994, Green: 1997, Dale: 1997), though the nature and extent of this change remains a moot point.

Within New Labour there is a manifest appreciation of these changing global trends and educational policy is promoted as a new 'vision'. This undiminished acceptance of

a 'modern world' constitutes a significant ideological foundation within New Labour's philosophy. In particular, a strong belief in the linear relationship between high quality education, increased wages, and greater productivity has instrumentally focused New Labour's vision for education in this country[6]. Also, the emphasis on 'value-added' contributions in the workplace and in society has been translated into New Labour's own version of 'social-ism'. This term (extracted from Tony Blair's biography) appeals to individuals to contribute to the development and well-being of society through their own efforts of self improvement i.e. "social nurturing" is achieved by "personal responsibility" (Jones: 1996, p17). A partnership of 'public' and 'private' value-systems is strongly espoused. *Public* values here refer to social democratic principles which are promoted and provided for by the state in support of a more just and equal society. *Private* values pertain to market ideals which are promoted and provided for by the state in support of capital accumulation. This twin value-system is pervasive in educational policy and discourse. For example, in *Raising Standards for all - the Government's Legislature Plans* (DfEE, 1997b), the objective of creating a new school framework (community, foundation and voluntary schools) was seen to "underpin diversity in the drive for higher standards while ensuring fairness and coherence..." (p11). *Diversity* and *equality* are not viewed in opposition to one another here - the former being seen as a necessary condition within the market, the latter as a necessary condition within the meaning of social democracy. A similar alliance of values is evident in New Labour's open acceptance of the concept of *choice* in the market place alongside a supposed *equality of opportunity* (p15). Here, there is an acceptance that 'choice' is as much a social democratic principle (promoting the 'right to choose') as it is a market principle (promoting the 'right of the consumer').

---

[6] This linear relationship assumption ignores the pervasive lack of 'high-skill' jobs currently available in the economy (Coffield: 1997, Apple: 1997).

In *Connecting the Learned Society - National Grid for Learning* (DfEE, 1997c), once more we see the partnership of values at work as the project aims to "stimulate public/private partnership, bringing together the best of the *private sector* creativity and the highest standards of *public service*" (p3, my emphases). Further, in the White Paper *Excellence in Schools* (DfEE, 1997a), there is a reconciliation between *human capital investment* and *social justice*:

> *"we are talking about investing in human capital in the age of knowledge [..] we must overcome the spiral of disadvantage, in which alienation from, or failure within, the education system is passed from one generation to the next"* (David Blunkett: DfEE, 1997a, p3).

The image of the state under New Labour is that of 'partner and provider'. The 'partner' function of the state reveals a dual representative purpose; it appears as the symbolic "controller and regulator" of the market (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998), while simultaneously acting as the defender and promoter of social democratic ideals. The 'provider' function of the state refers to those conditions which are *actively* effected for the successful partnership of both value systems. In this way, the 'provider' function of the state, which is traditionally associated with welfarism, is extended to facilitate the necessary conditions for increased market freedom (consistent with strong elements of neo-Liberal doctrine). The amalgamation of the 'partner' and 'provider' functions of the state, together with the dichotomous use of educational discourse, reveals the fact that New Labour's educational theory is informed by two separate strands of political/ideological thought. Both strands working together have been described as "a radical centre-ground" approach to politics (Giddens, 1996). Here, the idea of an egalitarian market economy is fostered

"which seeks new ways to promote and reconcile the objectives of efficiency, justice and freedom" (Gamble and Kelly, 1996). Such an approach, often referred to as the 'third way' (Giddens, 1998), signifies the forging of a new path between socialism and the free market.

At the outset, then, this 'centre-ground' approach appears to indicate a new way of viewing educational policy and practice. Certainly, New Labour can be distinguished from Old Labour by its more open ideological and functional acceptance of the free market mechanism. As mentioned earlier, this acceptance is rationalised and legitimated by New Labour on the grounds that there is no alternative to capitalism in the 'modern' world. However, on closer examination, this 'centre-ground' approach may be shown to be less unique than is suggested by its political and ideological proponents. To illustrate this point I would like to draw attention to a report commissioned by the National Council for Educational Standards for a Conservative government, almost twenty years ago. It may be of some surprise to the reader to note that such a seemingly 'out-dated' report bears much resemblance to significant policy initiatives now being developed in contemporary educational policy. The aim of the report in question (Bogdanor, 1979) was to put forward practical suggestions to improve standards in schools. Much of the report drew attention to the appalling state of academic standards in schools (which remains a current 'concern'); it legitimated the 'necessity' for the publication of exam results and the specialisation of schools; it highlighted the value of parental choice; it stressed the importance of high 'teacher quality' and the introduction of a compulsory probationary year for newly qualified teachers; and it even alluded to notions of classroom teacher promotion and the establishment of a General Teaching Council. This strong connection with

contemporary trends in educational policy and practice may be dismissed by observers as either evidence of a narrowing political/ideological spectrum, the cyclical nature of change, or the manifestation of a typical policy transfer system in operation. Elements of these arguments may indeed be valid. However, the key point to make here is that if one examines recent neo-Liberal policy and practice, particularly over the past decade, the strong connection with current trends renders New Labour's claim to 'uniqueness' as misleading.

LMS (Local Management of Schools) provisions, for example, continue to influence the funding and cultural arrangements in schools. Also, the predominant political message continues to sublimate academic performances and test results as the major criteria for 'successful' schools. The 'choice' metaphor, which remains a central tenet of neo-Liberalism, is adapted by New Labour and significantly bears a symbolic and practical resemblance. As under neo-Liberalism, "the ethical value of free choice is combined with the effect of efficiency in the allocation of resources" (Ball: 1990a, p5). In accepting this 'choice' metaphor, New Labour purposively engages with the underlying rhetoric that 'competition will raise standards'. 'Diversity' in education (as understood as a central tenet of neo-Liberalism) is also actively promoted by New Labour (Labour Party, 1995: DfEE, 2001). However this is mainly achieved, not just through the commitment to divide the school system *from without* (via the promotion of 'specialisation' and the acceptance of some forms of selection), but also by separating the 'quality' of state schools *from within* (see section Three of this chapter). Diversity, in this latter form, is instrumentally effective in encouraging further competition.

This brief discussion draws into question the 'unique' nature of New Labour's 'centre-ground' approach. In doing so, it does not wish to underplay the political/power dimensions of policy formation (Ball: 1990a, 1994a) and, in particular, the innovation of certain individuals who are central to the construction of New Labour's educational 'vision' (to be discussed briefly in section Three). It is accepted that the structural and historical dimensions to policy-making and practice (Grace, 1995) will continually influence any so-called *new* approach. It is also accepted that a comprehensive response to the question *what's new about New Labour?* requires a much more detailed comparison between contemporary educational policy and Old Labour/neo-Liberal perspectives. However, despite its obvious limitations, this discussion does draw attention to a very significant point: within New Labour philosophy there is a notable acceptance of an underlying market ideology which is adapted from the legacy of neo-Liberalism and which incorporates assumptions of 'choice', 'competition' and 'diversity'[7].

By examining this underlying market value-system, and in particular its association with social democratic claims, section Three of this chapter mainly concerns itself with questioning the 'commonsense' and 'unproblematic' image associated with New Labour's 'raising standards' agenda. Section Two now examines New Labour's theory of education. This analysis serves a dual purpose: it further illuminates the question *what's new about New Labour?* and examines *theoretical* claims; it begins to locate the 'raising standards' agenda within an ideological framework and advances a critique of its *policy* claims.

---

[7] This marked overlap of policy has led many commentators to criticise the uniqueness of a so-called 'centre ground approach'. Hutton (1997), for example, accuses the government of 'political

Section Two: New Labour's theory of education - centralist progressivism

It has been asserted thus far that New Labour's theory of education is informed by two separate strands of political/ideological thought. The following discussion details both strands as constituent parts of New Labour's overall theory of education. The first strand envisages education as central to economic prosperity and as underpinned by principles of economic rationality. The second strand views education in terms of its capacity to foster social democratic principles such as equality, justice and social cohesion. The 'partner' and 'provider' functions of the state (mentioned earlier) attempt to synthesise both value-systems. This intensification of state activity is designed to achieve a 'progressive' educational agenda. The term 'progressive' is used here in a 'forward looking' sense but, more specifically, refers to elements of progressivism - a political/philosophical movement in the USA at the turn of the century. At this time, progressivists shared a commitment "to use the government as an agency of human welfare" (Kennedy, 1971). While it is accepted that this movement has many critics (among them, Hofstadter: 1955, Hartz: 1955, Wiebe: 1967 and Kolko: 1973), and that it was founded as a liberal critique of (and not in partnership with) capital, its main role for state involvement in instrumental social action represents a similar *description* of the role of the state under New Labour. Both forms of state typology, in theory, attempt to 'make a real difference' to individual lives. It is contended here that, like the progressivists, New Labour advocates a common commitment to the positive state. This is evident from exhortations made to the people of Britain to follow its own 'vision' for education and to join the 'national crusade' for 'excellence' (DfEE, 1997a). Similarly, New Labour has used a 'vision' to create a new sense of optimism and prosperity. Effectively, it

---

transvestism' and of having 'a genuinely Conservative programme'.

regards the past as part of the problem and the future as the key to solutions. According to Grantham (1971, p11), "a kind of apocalyptic spirit permeated progressive thought - life was a morality play". This point is whimsically put by Roy Lubove (1959, p206):

> *"In Act I the participants must become conscious of their personal guilt for the evils which surround them. In Act II this scene of guilt must merge with a conviction of personal responsibility for the eradication of evil. Act III would witness the transvaluation of values - consummation and salvation".*

While it may be argued that this appears a touch melodramatic, the serious point to be made is that 'problems', which are highlighted and addressed by the state, facilitate the legitimation of action-based, problem-solving theories and techniques. A state that is seen to care about such 'problems', that intends to deal with them and, above all else, convinces us that it has the capacity to resolve them, legitimises its own actions. New Labour has identified problems with educational achievements; it has waged a new 'standards war'; it has piloted studies to show 'conclusive evidence' that problems exist and need to be resolved; it has justified through the increased empowerment of quasi-government agencies (such as, Ofsted and the Standards Effectiveness Unit) the 'correct' course of action needed to be taken and; it has indicated time and again the alternative to the 'vision' and has linked it to nothing short of disaster. Therefore in both the 'forward looking' sense of advancement involving a new 'vision' for a 'modern' world, and the added emphasis on a new "identity creation" (Jones: 1996, p12), New Labour's educational agenda is perceived to be **progressive**.

As mentioned earlier, the 'partner' and 'provider' functions of the state are paramount in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of this agenda. The state's leading role is enhanced as a result of New Labour's ideological acceptance of the underlying market value-system adapted from neo-Liberalism. From a strong central position of control, state power is even more centralised under New Labour while accountability and responsibility continues to be contracted-out to administrative, regional and local states[8]. Hence, the state remains in a powerful position to centrally formulate and administer educational policy. In effect, it acts as the main locus of power where **centrally**-driven policy initiatives reveal the ideological and political purposes of government.

In conjunction with these important points then, it is claimed here that a coherent philosophy of New Labour's educational strategy can best be described as **centralist progressivism**. This unique and somewhat contrived theory of education is defined in relation to its two strands of political/ideological thought, namely, **economic progressivism** and **social progressivism** (see Figure I below):

[8] McCaig (2001, p196) notes that "in terms of centralisation, the HMSO Act (1998) was believed to rival the Education Reform Act, 1988, with up to 100 new powers in the hands of the Secretary of State".

Figure I: Theory of centralist progressivism

The role of the state (as 'partner and provider') is to foster the partnership between economic objectives and the goals of social democracy. Economic progressivism advocates that the state will invest in 'human capital', which will result in high levels of skill, leading to economic prosperity. Social progressivism encourages the state to expand the opportunity of educational access to all groups, which will result in more highly educated numbers, leading to a more just society. Centralist progressivism, as an all-encompassing term, attempts to amalgamate both theories.

Economic Progressivism	**Social Progressivism**
Discourse: 'diversity', 'choice'[9], 'standards', 'capital investment' in education, 'private sector', 'efficiency principle', 'pressure/accountability', 'competition', 'financial management', 'market', 'business values', 'performance levels/league tables', 'economic individual', 'outcomes', 'effectiveness'.	*Discourse:* 'support', 'partnership', 'democratic choice', 'standards', 'fairness', 'equality', 'equal opportunity', 'educational improvement and effectiveness'[10], 'guidance', 'democratic participation', 'public sector', 'entitlement', 'assistance', 'collective', 'democratic process', 'social individual', 'social dynamics'.
The state is the *evaluator, regulator and controller* of the educational agenda that pursues the goals of economic prosperity. The agenda is constructed **around** the market and has a 'commonsense' purpose.	The state is *active* in leading from the centre and in urging the partnership of the public and private. The purpose of the state is to provide strong leadership in the pursuit of social democratic goals. The market mechanism exists but is not in opposition to these 'higher' pursuits.
There is a *strong acceptance of the market* by the state. Policies which incorporate strong market values are retained: • LMS • open enrolment • school categories • performance levels/league tables • selectivity • accountability of LEA • pressure on teachers to prepare their pupils for the 'modern world' • technical skills required for the market	The state takes a leading role in guiding on educational 'good practice'. Policies which involve *state educational guidance* include: • establishment of a GTC • nursery education • partnership arrangements with Wales • school meals • limits on infant class sizes • conduct of teachers/dismissal • home - school agreements • dissolution of FAS - fairer funding, increased funding • religious education and worship • guidance on 'proper' classroom practice
A Synthesis Approach?	
• school government - consumer power? • the establishment, alteration and discontinuance of schools (market pressure?) • education action zones - real inclusion of business values in education? • School specialisation – creation of a competitive two-tiered system in education? • new qualification - accountability of heads? • NQT status and teacher training provisions- a need for more qualified producers in the market place? • 'standards war' and 'targets'- economic?	• school government - democratic local control? • the establishment, alteration and discontinuance of schools (building new opportunity?) • education action zones - redressing social inequality and increasing opportunity? • School specialisation – redistributing resources and providing flexibility and opportunity of choice? • professional headship qualification (managing good practice?) • induction year for NQTs (providers of opportunity?) • inspection of teacher training (manging good practice?) • 'standards war' and 'targets'- developing opportunity for all?
Main data sources: Teaching and Higher Education Bill (DES, 1997a); School Standards and Framework Bill (DES, 1997b) and; Green Paper (DfEE , 2001)[11].	

[9] 'Choice' and 'standards' appear within both strands. In economic progressivism the former term refers to issues relating to 'consumerism', the latter term refers to academic awards which can be exchanged in the market place; with respect to social progressivism the former term refers to issues of 'individual freedom' and 'opportunity', and the latter term refers to a quality of education which can harness such potential.

[10] It could be argued that 'educational improvement and effectiveness' is necessary in order that Britain become more competitive within the global market. This indeed could be considered as an aim of economic progressivism. However, because educational improvement and effectiveness is mainly 'led' by the state, without necessarily being linked to the market in terms of policy formulation and invention, it can be included in the discourse of social progressivism. It is accepted that a synthesis of values can be inferred.

[11] One may distinguish between reality, rhetoric and theory within these data sources. Theory, as presented here, serves as an analytical tool for judging New Labour's 'raising standards' policy as applied in practice.

In relation to both strands of political/ideological thought, education is seen as the key to a partnership of values. Within **economic progressivism** education is envisaged as central to economic prosperity (see Figure I). Here, policy is a means by which the state can be more effective in evaluating, regulating and controlling the educational agenda for this purpose. This agenda is mainly constructed *around* the existing market mechanism and is designed to achieve economic success. In this way, economic progressivism is unlike neo-Liberalism. Despite their close relationship it is clear to see that the latter is the result of a lucid ideological philosophy, whereby the market is considered as the "ascendant metaphor" *through* which policies are constructed (Marginson: 1993 in Whitty, Power and Halpin: 1998, pp37,38). Economic progressivism, however, has no real ideological construction and instead is the result of an 'informed' acceptance of the market at work. This acceptance is derived from a 'commonsense' observation that the world is changing in a certain way (as described earlier) and that educational policy *must* adapt to this market. The market concept becomes 'reified' and not, necessarily, 'idealised'. New Labour's argument is not just restricted to the view that choice and diversity will raise standards and efficiency but also that they are "an inevitable concomitant of the changing cultural configurations of modern societies" (Green: 1997, p20). This view appears to be allied to a strong postmodernist position. A second important distinction between both doctrines lies with the fact that neo-Liberalism, by definition, is an all-encompassing theory of education. By contrast, economic progressivism does not appear as a solitary theoretical approach, rather, it forms an unlikely alliance with social progressivism. In this way, New Labour's overall philosophical composition comprises of an admixture of incoherent (and often competing) value-systems (Jones, 1996). Hence, while markets are seen as a means to an end (and not solely in terms of ideological means),

the state is shown to function (at times) *despite* the market i.e. the state support for the market mechanism will be compromised by the constant perceived need to control other aspects of policy from the centre. Thus, for example, the pervasive use of target-setting mechanisms may (at times) be seen more in terms of a desire to legitimate the state's ideological programme, and less in terms of an urge to regulate the market. The former function demands increased levels of state intervention and considerable financial commitment - a position which is an anathema to more liberal marketised versions of the state.

Within **social progressivism** education is envisaged as central to the objectives of social democracy (see Figure I). Here, educational policy facilitates a shift in the emphasis and the role of state activity. A number of state-driven educational initiatives serve to promote a certain ideological image of the 'centre'. This image is tinged by old welfarist values of social justice but is also stained by a 'visionary'/ 'progressive' desire to improve present social conditions. The market mechanism *is* accepted but is used only as a medium through which 'higher' goals are achieved. These 'higher' goals include a commitment to social democratic ideals and represent the interests of 'fairness', 'equality', 'equal opportunity', 'democracy' and the 'social development' of the individual. The aspirations of social democratic ideals are achieved through the actions of an '*actively* strong state' which strives towards academic 'excellence for all', and contrives to establish effective 'guidelines' on good practice in the interests of the commongood. Fairer funding systems are formulated and there is a strong assumption that high-level education must be availed of by all groups in society, in order that they may improve their social condition. Such aspirations are grounded in a

coherent ideology. However, it is claimed in the next section that they become less focused and disjointed when applied to the existing structure of the market mechanism.

It is clear from the discussions in this section that New Labour's theory of education is informed by the partnership of a somewhat paradoxical twin value-system. The theoretical economic dimension of this theory owes much to the legacy of neo-Liberalism, particularly in relation to its underlying market philosophy and the continued centralised power of the state. The theoretical social democratic dimension also owes much to this legacy in relation to its interpretation of affective issues of 'choice', 'opportunity' and 'diversity'. However, old welfarist principles of social justice and fairness are also conflated with these issues.

The analysis presented thus far highlights significant influences on educational theory ranging from the ideological effects of 'modernisation', to the legacy of Conservative thought and the commitment to synthesise two different and often competing value-systems. This proffers an important foundation for the location and critique of New Labour's approach to 'raising standards'. The next section now takes up this challenge. Specifically, it focuses upon: New Labour's rationale for a 'raising standards' policy (commensurate with its *centralist progressivist* claims); the conceptual use of the term 'standards' in working policy and; some inherent contradictory and problematic features of the 'raising standards' agenda.

Section Three: The 'raising standards' agenda

The 'standards' context

This chapter has already pointed to some important global, economic, social, and political factors which illuminate an understanding of New Labour's educational theory. The following discussions reiterate much of these points. This is due to the inseparable relationship between New Labour's theory of education and its approach to 'raising standards'. In essence, the latter agenda forms the substantial constituent of educational policy and practice and is firmly located within the theoretical framework of *centralist progressivism*. The aim of the following brief contextual analysis is to show how the 'raising standards' agenda is located within this theoretical paradigm. In addition, however, its purpose specifically extends to highlight key instrumental factors which have placed *standards* on the policy agenda. Thus, the enquiry presented henceforth focuses its attention more to 'working' (as opposed to 'theoretical') aspects of policy and practice.

As chapter One informs, the 'raising standards' agenda refers to the plethora of initiatives which are promoted within New Labour's approach to educational policy (see **Appendix I**). The rationale for this agenda can be located within a new 'vision' for the 'modern' world. This 'vision' is often couched in moral, progressive tones[12]:

> *"..we want world-class schools for our children in the new century. In a world of rapid change, every pupil will need to be literate, numerate and prepared for the citizenship of tomorrow"* (David Blunkett, DfEE: 1998a, foreword).

Such a 'modernisation' rationale is shown to be intrinsically linked to the goals of economic and social prosperity. As section Two highlights, this reflects an attempt to appeal to the twin value-systems inherent within the theory of *centralist progressivism*:

- *"We need all schools to achieve high standards for all pupils if we are to build a successful and inclusive economy and society in the 21st Century"* (David Blunkett, DfEE: 2000a, p1)
- *"[In the new Century]... education is the key to economic success, social cohesion and active citizenship"* (DfEE: 1998b, p32)

The need to adapt the existing educational system to the 'modern' world is aligned, in particular, with recent technological developments in the global economy. This seemingly reveals an ascendant concern for *economic progressivist* values:

"Education is the best economic policy there is, and it is in the marriage of education and technology that the future lies" (Tony Blair cited in Wild and King: 1999, p164).

The sublimation of *economic progressivist* values is further evidenced by New Labour's pre-occupation with national competitiveness. Here, the perceived need to achieve 'world standards' in education (Foster: 1996, p4) is significantly informed in large part by the proliferation of universal (more accurately, western) policy ideas, and the inevitable international comparisons of achievement. A culture of individualism is understood in association with this assumption of national competitiveness:

---

[12] The White Paper *Excellence in Schools* refers to the standards agenda as a 'crusade' (DfEE, 1997a).

- *"Our weakness lies in our performance in basic and intermediate skills [...] putting the UK ninth in a recent international survey of 12 industrial countries"* (DfEE: 1998c, p5)
- *"Our vision is to build a new culture of learning which will underpin national competitiveness and personal prosperity....."* (DfEE: 1999a, p6)

Thus, New Labour is keen to position Britain as strong runners in the 'international horse race' in education (Brown, 1988). Such an approach serves to legitimate its national 'raising standards' agenda in the light of 'the urgent' (DfEE, 1999a) challenge for change. While there is considerable doubt surrounding the validity and reliability of international comparisons of performance (Brown: 1988, Furlong: 1998), this practice has, according to MacBeath (1997, pp12,13),

> *"frightened policy-makers and politicians into a tightening up of standards and has called for a closer monitoring of teachers, and a demonstrable linkage between attainment and methods used to raise attainment".*

The state's control over the direction of such change remains significant despite global transformations in the nature of its role (Hirst and Thompson, 1995)[13]. This is clearly manifest in pervasive ideological and regulatory mechanisms which are utilised by the state to co-ordinate the formulation and implementation of the 'raising standards' agenda (see chapter Three). Key policy members of the state apparatus, in particular, are paramount in the promotion of a progressive 'raising standards' agenda[14]. At the

---

[13] This runs contrary to the views of extreme 'globalisation' theorists (such as Ohmae: 1990, 1995) who believe that, due to the proliferation of global market forces and trans-national companies, the nation state has become both powerless and unnecessary as a force for effective public governance. Held et al (1999) refer to proponents of this extreme position as 'hyperglobalizers'.

[14] Individuals such as Tony Blair, David Blunkett, Chris Woodhead (now retired), Anthea Millet, Michael Barber, Estelle Morris, and David Jesson (champion of specialist schools) may be singled out for attention here.

heart of their authority lies a personal and subjective commitment to *affective* change i.e. change which modifies the manner in which education and teaching is perceived and practised. The following statements highlight the role of key players who have this capacity to shape 'raising standards' policies:

- *"Yes, I am a fundamentalist when it comes to education: I believe in discipline, solid mental arithmetic, learning to read and write accurately, plenty of homework, increasing expectations and developing potential"* (David Blunkett, TES: Jan 8, 1999)
- *"The only way for the profession to go forward is to raise the game: the more children who do well, the more parents will approve [...] Ofsted is on the side of the angels"* (Chris Woodhead, Sunday Times: March 19, 2000)
- *"Dreaming is, in my view, the first step to radical change....the growing concern of politicians, especially Tony Blair and David Blunkett, about the need for radical improvement in the country's educational performance will provide [the drive to achieve it]"* (Michael Barber: 1997, p280)

The above quotes serve to remind that no 'vision' can be created without the commitment of key players - this will to *change* is matched by those individuals' weight in the policy-making process.

This brief contextual analysis, then, highlights the various stimuli which edify New Labour's 'raising standards' agenda. In correspondence with the discussions presented thus far in this chapter, policy and practice is seen to promote:

- the legitimation of a 'modernised' education system

- competition at individual and international levels in order to achieve 'world standards'
- the twin goals of economic and social prosperity
- the views of a select group of 'visionaries'

New Labour's conceptual use of 'standards'

In association with the rationale delineated above, New Labour claims (from a pragmatic standpoint) that 'raising standards' is aimed at "improving the quality of teaching and learning" in schools (DfEE, 1997a). At face value, it is unsurprising to see little opposition from parents, teachers and other members of society to such a rhetorically powerful argument. However, a more critical analysis of the 'raising standards' agenda can be *grounded* in a treatise of New Labour's conceptual use of the term 'standards'. The following discussions pertain to this investigation.

The 'raising standards' agenda, when presented in a populist image-form, conceals complex and problematic issues. These may be unveiled when one firstly considers 'the underlying idea' (Sutherland: 1994, p4) associated with a number of 'standards' policies. In tandem, a national curriculum, a system of national tests, an intended independent inspection body (Ofsted), and an education system which condemns 'failure' and celebrates 'success', each highlight the complex and problematic nature of 'standards' (O'Brien, 1998). This is also observed when one considers the plethora of approaches adopted by New Labour in the pursuit of 'raising standards'. Estelle Morris, the schools minister, defends a number of different "radical approaches" to 'raising standards' (TES: June 26, 1998a). Such approaches include more business

links in education, a more relaxed curriculum with an emphasis on the 'basics', an increase in teachers' salaries, more technology in schools, an increase in teaching time, and more school specialisation. While it is not my intention to critically evaluate these policy areas, it is clear that each proposal exhibits contestable and problematic features[15]. Consequently, the 'raising standards' agenda cannot be seen as unproblematic. This observation points to the potentiality for conflict whereby individuals (in particular, teachers) may support the 'raising standards' agenda in principle, but may reject the manner in which proposals are both presented and effected in schools.

New Labour functionally denotes 'standards' in academic terms. This is legitimated on the grounds that schools can be held more accountable for their 'performance' in the market place. From an 'efficiency' perspective, this means that schools will need to concentrate on the main task at hand - raising academic results. Teachers' time should be maximised to this effect. This is manifest, for example, in a recent DfEE report on bureaucratic workload where it is recommended that "schools should be evaluated primarily by the educational standards achieved" (DfEE: 1998d, p1). This principle somewhat contravenes a previous position when Labour were in opposition:

> *"The need for more sophisticated measures of performance than crude examination results cannot be overstressed"* (Labour Party, 1991).

New Labour's present-day emphasis on crude examination results, however, means that schools are deemed 'effective' in accordance with this form of evaluation. As MacBeath (1997, p13) notes:

---

[15] In relation to proposals for more business links in education and school specialisation, for example, there are many problems associated with the introduction and purposes of Education Action Zones

> *"..the term 'effective' is widely used, even by the most intelligent of researchers, as synonymous with a school which can show a high level of test results".*

Thus, the ultimate goal in schools appears to be 'performance, not learning' (Covington, 1996). This functional representation for 'standards' belies New Labour's supposedly *balanced* commitment to social progressivist values. Further, it symbolises a second site for potential conflict, as objectors to this narrowly focused definition point to meaningful alternative interpretations for the term 'standards' (see chapter Six).

New Labour's use of international comparisons and 'evidence-based' research is instrumental in informing a rationale for 'raising standards' (as referred to in this section). The claim is that evidence-based research pointing to "poor national performance" and the need to compete for "world standards" in education (Foster: 1996, p4) justifies the policy of 'raising standards'. A further claim espouses that research evidence can be amassed detailing the characteristics of so-called 'effective' schools, with a view to informing 'good practice' throughout the school system (see chapter Three). The assumption follows that the state is bound to comply with such a research impetus in order to continue to exert considerable pressure and influence from the centre on educational practice. While the operation of such 'evidence-based' research can be shown to be problematic (see final part of this section), this practice nevertheless represents an important empirical assumption within New Labour's conceptual use of 'standards'. Specifically, it permits the state to infer that what has been found true in known cases so far also holds in other cases where the 'same'

(O'Brien, 1999). The final part of this section highlights some of these issues.

conditions obtain. In relation to the policy of 'raising standards', the implication is that, schematically, if x% of school As achieve Y results, then the probability that, in the same conditions, the next school A will achieve Y results is x%. Thus, a 'standards uniformity' (or 'standardisation of standards') is arrived at whereby each school under similar conditions is expected to perform in a similar manner (O'Brien, 1998). In order to create 'similar' conditions, the state actively promotes 'good' practice which is invariably in line with the practice of 'successful' schools ('success' being largely determined by 'effective' academic outcomes). It is postulated that a uniform practice of 'raising standards' will, in tandem, raise the 'success' levels of schools which are regarded as least 'effective'. Two simplistic assumptions are shaped around this argument. The first relates to the idea that 'standards' can be objectively measured. The second assumption refers to the notion that 'standards' can be made equivalent between schools. These two postulations are now considered.

The *objectivity* assumption pertains to the idea that "achievement outcomes are best thought to be imposed equally on all children, irrespective of ability and circumstance" (Covington: 1996, pp 24-26)[16]. Such an *objective* agenda fosters the belief that *all* schools can become 'excellent':

> *"All schools, including those in the most disadvantaged circumstances, can take up the challenge of raising standards"* (DfEE: 1998a, p12).

Underpinning this assumption lies a rationale for testing which amalgamates notions of 'objectivity' with those of 'fairness'. Since the evaluation of tests is based on clear criteria, subtle measurement, and standardisation (which facilitates 'fair' comparisons

[16] Although Covington focuses his attention towards the US educational system, I believe that the ideas presented here resonate well within the UK context.

between schools), an 'objective' system of assessment is presented in a manner "which makes it hard to refute" (Broadfoot: 1996, pp 85, 86). However, such faith in the ability of assessment to level out 'disadvantage' in the school system[17], continues to ignore pervasive inequities present therein (to be discussed later in this section). Further, it places the school as the primary agent of responsibility for the educational 'success' and general well-being of its pupils. The argument runs: 'in order to increase economic prosperity and life chance opportunities for its pupils, schools must be seen to advance its academic results year-on-year'. Inevitably, this involves schools revising existing practice and devising new ways of *predicting* future educational outcomes.

This emphasis on prediction reflects New Labour's imperceptive assumption that a pupil's ability[18] can be objectively measured against set criteria of 'performance'. In effect, this advances the notion that a child's ability "has a fixed limit and one which can be confidently predicted" (Portsmouth and Caswell: 1988, p14). Numerous targets set by New Labour manifest these claims:

- *"By 2002, 80% of all 11 year olds should reach the standard of English expected for their age"*
- *"By 2002, 75% of all 11 year olds will reach the standard for their age in maths"*
- *"Within a decade, every child will leave primary school with a reading age of at least 11 (barely half do today)* [source: Labour Party, 1997]

Thus, a particular meaning for 'standards' is promoted in harmony with the aims of a utilitarian model of education (see chapter Three). Such a model appears to signify

---

[17] Broadfoot (1998) refers to this credence as 'assessment panacea'.
[18] 'Ability', as used here, refers to a pupil's 'learning talents and potential'.

school life as if it were a matter of neatly arranged hurdles, with grades given along the way. With its emphases on standards, testing, organisation, and management, the 'debate' about education becomes consumed with everything but the activity of learning itself (Abbs, 1994). In essence, the act of learning is reduced to a 'transmissive' model of schooling (Gipps, 1993). This contravenes the view that learning is a complex affair. As Levin (1993) notes, the act of learning is complex because: outcomes are multiple and jointly produced; pupils learn at different rates; learning is affected by factors outside the school and; learning is strongly dependent on pupils' input (in terms of time and effort). Thus, while one does not wish to disregard the importance of outcomes-as-standards, it is important to recognise the danger of conceiving 'learning' within this singular mode. This recognition leads one to question the core educational functioning of schools as they appear to be increasingly bounded by the pressing concern for 'objectively' measuring and predicting exam performance. In effect, schools are compelled to engage in such activity since they have a "..vested interest in showing that targets are being fulfilled and things are improving" (Skidelsky, Guardian Education: December 9, 1997)[19]. This focused energy may be proffered as one explanation why schools differ greatly in the extent to which they concentrate on their 'primary purpose' i.e. teaching and learning (Sammons et al: 1995, p13).

The second assumption inherent within New Labour's conceptual use of 'standards' is that of *equivalency*. This concept is discernible throughout the ethos and practice of the Standards Effectiveness Unit, for example, and relates to the view that certain schools are models of 'excellence' whose practices are worthy of emulation. Thus, schools are judged against the 'success levels' of the most 'effective' organisations:

---

[19] Skidelsky asserts that this represents the "ubiquity of cheating... [a] dominant characteristic of all centrally planned systems.." (Skidelsky, Guardian Education: December 9, 1997).

- *".. the most successful schools do around six times better than the least successful"* (Woodhead: 1995, pp16,17)
- *"The problem with our education system is easily stated: excellence at the top is not matched by high standards for the majority of children"* (DfEE: 1997a, p10)
- *"The challenge is to make the best practice of some schools into the reality for every school"* (DfEE: 1998a, p13)

In correspondence with this 'equivalency' assumption, New Labour engages in, what Thrupp (1999) refers to as, the 'politics of polarization and blame'. Here, schools which 'lose' in the educational market place are 'named and shamed' and singled out for improvement[20]. Meanwhile, schools which 'succeed' in the educational market place are 'named and acclaimed'[21] and singled out as role models of 'effectiveness'. In essence, this represents a blatant attempt to reproduce 'winners and losers' - a proposal which finds sympathy in neo-Liberal (and economic progressivist) ideology because it supports the conviction that 'competition will raise standards'. Faith in the notion of 'role emulation' is promulgated where the least 'effective' schools must be seen to learn from their 'successful' counterparts. This presumption is advanced irrespective of the varying social conditions which prevail between such schools[22]. Here, a form of 'expert metaphor' is implicitly engaged, whereby 'one social group's understanding of a complex social situation can be offered as if it were the *only* understanding of the social situation' (Gilroy and Wilcox: 1997, p31 – my emphasis).

---

[20] New proposals mean that schools that fail to get 5 good GCSE passes for at least 15% of their pupils (over three consecutive years) will be considered for a 'Fresh Start' (DfEE, 2000a).
[21] Of the 73 schools 'named and acclaimed' in 1998, a disproportionate amount were of GM (Grant Maintained) status (source: DfEE, 1998e).
[22] This may be seen as a way of "concealing and politically sublimating systemic inequities than of remedying them" (Paquette: 1998, p46). The final part of this section develops this argument.

These latter points highlight the central problem with the 'equivalency' assumption - that is, the notion of 'standards' is experienced and understood in distinct ways by different social groups. Thus, it is likely that more 'effective' and least 'effective' schools will vary in their capacity to respond to the 'raising standards' agenda. In particular, the latter group face bigger challenges inasmuch as they often experience poor levels of resources, low socio-economic status intakes, minimal levels of expectations, and a perceived need for relatively higher levels of improvement. Further, within such environments, the call for increased standards is often understood as a requirement to 'avoid punishment'. This idea is manifest, for example, in schools which strive to reach a certain level of GCSE passes in order to avoid being labelled as 'failing' or the contingency of being placed on 'special measures'. Here, 'standards' are seen less as 'achievable goals' and more as 'universal demands'. In this regard, New Labour's use of 'raising standards' may be seen in terms of a *negative incentive* for improvement.

Contradictory and problematic features

The final part of this section sets out to examine contradictory and problematic features inherent within the 'raising standards' agenda. The substance of the debate is derived from the analysis developed thus far on 'raising standards'. In addition, Education Action Zones (EAZs) are proffered as an example of one aspect of policy which exhibit such contradictory and problematic features. Specifically, the central tension between economic and social progressivism is highlighted as the source for much of the inconsistency in this policy provision. Such tension is accentuated in

different aspects of policy where there appears to be the sublimation of an economic agenda in conjunction with the undermining of social progressivist values. Other problematic features inherent within the 'raising standards' agenda, that are not directly related to this 'tension', are also highlighted here. Most of these issues are advanced from our previous discussions on New Labour's conceptual use of 'standards'.

The following enquiry, therefore, proceeds towards a critique of 'raising standards'. This examination is not exhaustive since: a) any intent to provide a full critique would require attention beyond the limits of this study and b) the discussions presented only partially illuminate our main research question - hence, in relation to the main study, it is necessary to extend the critique of 'raising standards' to include teachers' perceptions of events. With this proviso, it is claimed that the following analysis helps to dislocate the populist image of the 'raising standards' agenda by revealing its complex and problematic nature. This exposition, in turn, assists in our attempts to illuminate an understanding of teachers' perceptions of 'raising standards'. In this way, we may draw on the following analysis to explicate (at a later stage in this study) the manner in which teachers might perceive and reconcile such problems in practice.

The contradictory nature of 'raising standards' can be directly linked to the dual role of education in promoting social integration, on the one hand, and reproducing a system of domination, on the other. Here, the state is involved in:

> *"..promoting equality, democracy, toleration, rationality, inalienable rights on the one hand, while legitimising inequality, authoritarianism,*

fragmentation, prejudice and submission on the other" (Gintis: 1980, p2 in Broadfoot: 1996, p76).

This antagonistic role of the state arises out of the fundamental contradiction of capital (or 'legitimation crisis' - Habermas, 1976) which highlights "the necessity for wealth to be socially produced while being privately appropriated" (Broadfoot: 1996, p76). Within the educational sphere contradictions arise as policy and practice are legitimated on the grounds of working in the interests of 'many', while simultaneously serving the interests of 'individuals' (usually, members of the dominant class - Bernstein, 1977). Within *centralist progressivism* this paradoxical condition is manifest in the strong tension between economic and social progressivist claims. Such tension is significantly present within contemporary policy provisions. EAZs may be given as one aspect of policy and practice where this tension is disclosed.

New Labour's rhetoric endorses 'raising standards' on the grounds that it fosters the interests of the disadvantaged 'few' (DfEE, 1999b). EAZs may be proposed as a good policy example of this rationale. While it has been suggested that EAZs symbolise New Labour's 'third way' approach to public service reform (Hackett: 1998 in Whitty: 1998, p12), a number of problematic features remain within current proposals. These problematic features may be linked directly to the tension between economic and social progressivist concerns (as mentioned above). At first glance such a tension appears invisible. EAZs are testimony to New Labour's active encouragement of 'public' and 'private' partnership which is manifest in the projected image, funding arrangements, and operational control of participating schools. From a market perspective, zones are perceived by New Labour as offering real 'choice' to disadvantaged communities and

promoting the necessary conditions for specialised investment in 'human capital'. From an equity perspective, zones are perceived to redistribute important educational resources and opportunity to sections of the 'disadvantaged' school population. Some aspects of this 'equity function' of zones have been cautiously welcomed by educationalists (e.g. Mortimore and Whitty, 1997). However, it is claimed here that a number of significant concerns remain. One major concern pertains to the view that this policy may sublimate the economic agenda at the expense of social democratic objectives.

In addressing this concern, the role of business values in the formulation and implementation of zone policy is questioned. For example, there is much confusion over the role of private business in at least two of the initial proposed zones. Rumours abound concerning the future possibility of privatised 'profit' zones (TES: July 3, 1998) and the influence of business groups within each action forum. Also, the question of whether action forums are genuinely concerned with 'bottom-up' innovation or with the continuance of established 'good' practice leads to a confusion over the role function of these zones. There are misgivings, too, over the strong vocational element within participating secondary schools and the imposed concentration on 'basic skills'. It is feared that these curriculum arrangements may serve to reinforce inequality

"by excluding students from achieving more academic qualifications and from the opportunities in higher education and employment which require them" (Hatcher: 1998, p497).

The suspension of existing national pay conditions arrangements for teachers in zones is in line with the educational market view that this will have the effect of attracting the very best 'producers'. However, a counter-argument must also be considered; this arrangement may lead to the imposition of an increased bureaucratic workload, job insecurity, increased inequality of pay and a divisive teaching culture. The subjugation of social democratic values within the *wider* education system is made clear by the realisation that EAZ policy does nothing directly for disadvantaged populations outside of the zones (Mortimore and Whitty, 1997)[23]. While some attempts are now being made by New Labour to develop an integrated approach to community development in disadvantaged areas (in terms of health, housing and employment programmes)[24], it is clear that the level of funding alone is inadequate for progress (Hatcher, 1998). At present, EAZs are set to function largely in isolation from an integrated approach to community development. For this reason they cannot be expected to redress social inequality in disadvantaged areas.

As Figure I in section Two highlights, zones may be interpreted as the real inclusion of business values in education or as the scope for redressing social inequality in disadvantaged communities. This highlights the fact that the purposive direction of EAZs is somewhat blurred. While it is accepted that, at present, zones are not fully understood and have not been tested in a thorough way, the discussion presented here stresses the problematic nature of a proposed synthesis approach to this policy. In particular, this discussion highlights the need for New Labour to address the central tension between the purposive demands of economic and social democratic agendas.

---

[23] Further, EAZ policy can be interpreted as 'symbolic' since it represents a "totem of egalitarian left positionality which [can] be embraced without serious economic or political cost to New Labour" (McCaig: 2001, p193).

[24] Recent proposals include the introduction of 'city academies' (DfEE, 2000a).

Further, it stresses the government's responsibility in examining how far, and in what ways, this policy needs to be regulated in order to avoid the failure of its own synthesis claims.

Underpinning New Labour's 'objectivity' assumption (as the last part of this section highlights) is the assertion that all schools can be 'excellent'. Poverty, it is argued, "is no excuse" in the drive to 'raise standards' (Margaret Hodge: TES, February 20 1998). The educational crusade must decide to either *include* those who are disadvantaged or "be forced to conclude that there was not much we could do for them" (Michael Barber: TES, September 12 1997). In response to these points, I would accept that tackling poverty on its own is of course insufficient. However, I would strongly argue that New Labour's promotion of an 'all-inclusive' educational policy with little regard for socio-economic factors must seriously be questioned. On this point, it is widely acknowledged that socio-economic background factors are more influential in accounting for differences in educational achievement than school improvement factors (Benn and Chitty: 1997, Hatcher: 1996). The fact still remains that there are many students disaffected with the schooling system and many of this group are recognised as economically 'disadvantaged' (Slee: 1995, Child Poverty Action Group: 1993, Brown and Lauder: 1997). Yet, poverty is not just defined and explained in relation to economic factors. Social class, gender and ethnicity factors also need to be considered. Hence, in a general sense the concept of poverty may be used to refer to the opportunity (or lack of opportunity) to improve one's social condition. In essence, social opportunity is enhanced or constrained by issues relating to 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu: 1986, p47). Giddens (1984, pp83-86) refers to the patterning of *resource* and *constraint* which is influential in determining the social

positions of groups in cultural conflict (in Jones: 1996, p3). The former term refers to groups which are "successful in cultural politics", who have the "opportunity for collective discussion and elaboration of their projects", and who are "sponsored by various powerful agencies" (p3). The category of constraint involves groups which endure opposite conditions. Using this analysis, it is clear that New Labour's pursuit of social egalitarianism through a uniform educational policy is extremely problematic, given at the very least existing pervasive inequities in the levels of 'resources' held by certain groups within the school population. Also, given that the very nature of education serves to reproduce these differences (Brown et al: 1997), it is far too simplistic to assume that improvements in 'standards' will lead to widespread improvements in social conditions.

Contemporary educational policy, then, fails to adopt a much wider social focus in the pursuit of 'raising standards' (Jones, 1996). This points to a "pervasive lack of relational thinking in New Labour's approach to education" (Whitty: 1998, p1), whereby a fragmented 40-30-30 class society (Hutton, 1996) continues to be disregarded. New Labour's insistence that 'standards matter more than structures'[25] (DfEE, 1997a) indicates this lack of relational thinking. Here, it is strongly implied that, within a policy context, standards and structures are almost conceptually independent of each other. This is both short-sighted and problematic. It is contended here that social *structural* issues are important in the drive to 'raise standards'. Thus, tackling poverty (in the broadest sense) should operate concurrently with educational reform and should incorporate the pertinent need for a greater emphasis on positive discrimination. In Offe's terms this means that an educational policy on standards

should be 'conjunctural' (1985, p225) i.e. it should recognise the integral relationship between structures and standards. Such a conjunctural policy would acknowledge within a diverse educational structure the perpetuation of educational, social, and 'cultural capital' inequities. At present, a so-called *all-inclusive* 'raising standards' policy conceals the relative academic performance of disadvantaged groups (Bell: 1995, pp 32,33) and fails to recognise that this "has often remained similar or worsened even when the absolute performance of such groups has improved" (Whitty, Power and Halpin: 1998, p8). Thus, while proponents of a 'standardisation' of standards are quick to point out 'failure' in the system (for example, Woodhead: 1995, p4), they neglect to take into account contemporary inequalities of outcomes. In essence, this constitutes a subjugation of social progressivist values within a nominal synthesis approach. In association with this undermining of social democratic ideals, an economic agenda endures which emphasises 'performance' over 'learning' and underscores the role of 'competition' in education.

It is claimed, thus far, that problematic features of policy emanate (to a significant degree) from the 'tension' present within New Labour's theory of education[26]. Other policy problems exist, however, that are not necessarily linked to this tension. In relation to assessment, for example, there is growing evidence that the exam tests themselves lead to the lowering of standards (New Statesman: October 23, 1998). Further, regarding the inspection process, Gilroy and Wilcox (1997) point to a number of assumptions behind Ofsted's model of judgement that cause concern. Specifically, they note that:

---

[25] Given New Labour's creation of new school categories (foundation, voluntary and community), and its promotion of new setting arrangements and school specialisation, the phrase 'standards matter more than structures' appears inherently contradictory.

> *"...Ofsted's crude assumption that there are objective, pre-existing standards with which to test hypotheses prejudges the openness of the enquiry and, in a social setting, ignores the rich variety of context which gives behaviour and life their significance and meaning"* (Gilroy and Wilcox: 1997, p33).

In addition, new research evidence suggests that the inspection process itself is responsible for the lowering of educational standards (TES: Oct 23, 1998). There are problems too with New Labour's use of 'evidence-based' research (as highlighted briefly in the last part of this section). Furlong (1998) , for example, points to the fact that if organisations such as Ofsted and the TTA (Teacher Training Agency) hope for "crisp clear findings" from research, they will inevitably be disappointed. This is because there are a number of complexities within teaching and learning situations, as well as numerous problems relating to the implementation of research findings. Another problem with this assumption is the assertion that the government is ignoring educational research which questions the viability of its approach (Plewis and Goldstein, 1998). Whitty (1998) claims in relation to EAZs, for example, that the scope for developing upon or avoiding past experiences has been lost by New Labour through its disregard for past schemes such as Educational Priority Areas (EPAs), Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) and City Technology Colleges (CTCs). There has also been a lack of attention to relevant international evidence, such as the role of business in US schools (Molnar, 1996) and the Education Priority Zones in France (Hatcher, 1998). As well as disregarding existing relevant research, Whitty (1998, p7) argues that "New Labour often seems to demand that we are either with the

---

[26] In terms of our earlier discussion, this 'tension' is explained by a divergence between the state's role as 'partner' (i.e. its *symbolic* representation of the alliance of economic and social progressivist values) and its function as 'provider' (i.e. its *active* promotion of this so-called alliance).

government 100% or we are against it". In the words of Giroux (1997, p15), this stress on absolute solidarity may be construed as "an assault on critical thinking".

New Labour's clear endorsement of setting, banding and 'fast-tracking' methods in schools can be viewed upon as further indication of a disregard for both critical thought and more conclusive evidence-based research. Here, setting is openly promoted as a means to extend selection *within* schools (Gillborn: 1998, p722):

> *"We favour all-in schooling which identifies the distinct abilities of individual pupils and organises them in classes to maximise their progress in individual subjects"* (Labour Party: 1997, pp 3-4)[27].

This endorsement of setting prevails despite the fact that it is not seen by educational research to be more effective, especially in relation to the advancement of low ability students (Hatcher: 1996, pp32-34). Indeed, setting appears as the predominant form of ability grouping in secondary schools (Ireson, 1999), notwithstanding other concerns that it replicates existing social divisions based on social class and ethnic differences (Gillborn: 1998, Slavin: 1996). This willing acceptance of selection points once more to New Labour's lack of 'relational thinking' in educational policy, as a so-called 'modernised' structure of selection continues to be "socially discriminatory in its consequences" (Hatcher, 1998). Moreover, selection is presented in an authoritative manner as the natural form of ability grouping in schools. This belies a rhetorical commitment to an openness of enquiry:

> *"The wider and more open the debate, public and professional, the more likely it is that current ideas and initiatives are developed in a purposeful way*

[27] These sentiments are endorsed by the government's recent intention to "encourage express sets and early entry to the Key Stage 3 tests for those pupils who are ready" (DfEE: 2001, p13).

so that standards of pupil achievement really do begin to rise" (Woodhead: 1995, p1).

The above sentiments have never entered into the selection 'debate'[28], however, and calls for widespread setting procedures to be scrutinised have largely been ignored. In the interests of a more open enquiry, then, calls for more research into mixed ability teaching in schools now appear valid (Boaler, Wiliam and Brown: 1998). Of course opportunities for a more open debate on any educational issue are largely bounded by the willingness and capacity of government to create an appropriate climate for such a pursuit. At present, there is a real danger that the pace of change alone negates against this mood. Further, as education becomes more politicised, there is a danger that policy procedure will be 'traded-off' against strategies of electoral pragmatism which are designed to appease the middle class voter.

Conclusion

This chapter began by enquiring *what's new about New Labour?* Subsequent investigation revealed that New Labour's approach owes much to the legacy of Conservative policy and practice, particularly in relation to an underlying market ideology and the centralisation of state power. New Labour's theory of education is described here as *centralist progressivism*. This theory is defined in relation to its two strands of political/ideological thought, namely, economic progressivism and social progressivism. The 'raising standards' agenda is legitimated within this theoretical framework. A more critical analysis of this agenda, however, can be *grounded* in a

treatise of New Labour's conceptual use of the term 'standards'. In particular, the 'objectivity' and 'equivalency' assumptions underpinning New Labour's 'standards' policy reveal a notable imbalance within a so-called synthesis approach. This inconsistency is manifest in current aspects of policy provision (such as EAZs) where, it is argued, an economic agenda is sublimated at the expense of social democratic interests. Thus, a number of contradictory and problematic features emerge within the 'raising standards' agenda which emanate from the significant tension inherent in *centralist progressivism*. In addition, other problems appear which are not necessarily linked to this tension. They include questions relating to New Labour's use of 'evidence-based' research, doubts about assessment and inspection procedures, disputes pertinent to the use of selection procedures, and problems relating to the increased politicisation of education. The list is not exhaustive.

In relation to the present study, this chapter should be viewed upon as 'setting the scene'. Specifically, it serves as a contextual source for the location of the 'raising standards' agenda within New Labour's theory of education. It also acts as an important foundation for a critique of this agenda. Thus, the analysis presented helps to dislocate the populist image of the 'raising standards' agenda by revealing its contradictory and problematic constitution. In doing so, it points to the probability that teachers will respond to 'raising standards' in both a complex and diversified manner. Thus, it is claimed that teachers are likely to identify with the policy problems highlighted here (at least to a certain degree). Further, it is argued that, while most teachers would agree with the 'raising standards' message in principle, the manner in which this message is conceived and effected in practice remains contestable. These

---

[28] Neither has there been any discussions on the viability or otherwise of specialist schools (Guardian Education: February 13, 2001).

assumptions are tested throughout this study. Thus, in our attempts to illuminate an understanding of teachers' perceptions of 'raising standards', it remains important to examine how the problems identified here resonate with teachers' perceptions and practical experiences.

The analysis presented thus far points to the theoretical significance of the 'raising standards' agenda. Chapter Three develops from this theme by illustrating how such an agenda is systematically promoted in schools. Here, a managerialst form of politicised action is revealed which is designed to shape new conditions for formal and cultural organisational practices. Such transformations, which are attained via regulatory and ideological means, are shown to culminate in a re-fashioning of teachers' identity and work. This ensuing cultural change remains central to the present research study, as it seeks to explicate teachers' perceptions of an increasingly *affective* 'raising standards' agenda.

Chapter Three: The Authoritative State - regulation, managerialism and the reconstruction of school culture

Introduction

The last chapter points to New Labour's open acceptance of an emergent postmodern world which emphasises changes within the economic, political and cultural spheres. What is also highlighted is New Labour's firm commitment to utilise its central power to shape a new *progressive* educational agenda, commensurate with such postmodern conditions. A seeming *de facto* approval of postmodern change, however, conceals a number of significant paradoxes. The first is manifest in the capacity (or more accurately, the incapacity) of the school system to respond to postmodern educational demands. Such demands centre around the argument that schools should produce more flexible and imaginative workers. This may be achieved through educational provisions for more: cultural diversity, technological improvements, inclusive decision-making, continuous professional development, and engaging methods for learning. The capacity of the school system to respond to these perceived needs is both limited and contradictory, however[29]. This is because, in A Hargreaves' words (1994a, p3), the system is "modernistic and monolithic [..and..] continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures". Hence, the task of educating the next generation of workers confronts the considerable challenge of balancing postmodern ideals with extant constraints.

---

[29] Davies and Hentschke (1994, p97), for example, do not feel that there is an effective degree of decentralisation which provides sufficient autonomy for decision-making in our schools.

A second paradox associated with New Labour's seeming *de facto* acceptance of postmodern change lies with the nature of the state's central role in education. On the one hand, New Labour is keen to promote the state's role in fostering new forms of democratic accountability through devolved mechanisms of responsibility:

> *"We will replace centralised and bureaucratic control with renewed democratic accountability to stakeholders and the wider community"* (DfEE: 1998b, p10).

However, in attempting to reinvent itself as a "quasi-enterprise association" (Cerny, 1997), it does not follow that the state's role in education is diminished. Rather, state power may be seen to expand as it manages educational provision from a distance. This 'steering' power allows policy makers to withdraw "from the murky plain of overwhelming detail [..] to take refuge in the clear and commanding heights of strategic 'profiling'" (Neave: 1988, p12). As mentioned in the previous chapter, this form of central power can be attributed to the transformation of the nation state into a 'competition state'. This chapter develops this point further by highlighting how, in the interests of marketisation and hegemonic authority, the state retains a strong locus of control over the 'raising standards' agenda. A third and final paradox points to the fact that while postmodernity is characterised by rational insecurity and scientific uncertainty (A Hargreaves, 1994), New Labour continues to promote educational policy as a clear and assured 'vision'. This involves the reorganisation of 'global interpretations' as 'global realities'. Thus, the state may be shown itself to be "driving a process of *political* globalisation which is forcing the pace of globalisation in economic, social and cultural spheres" (Cerny: 1997, p252 - his emphasis).

All three paradoxes highlighted here point to inconsistencies within New Labour's educational approach. Moreover, they proffer a fundamental understanding of the changing context of state activity in education. Soucek (1994, p46) elaborates on the state's new role. He argues that there are three crucial areas that are focal points in effecting a transition from Fordist to post-Fordist schooling. By implication, these represent significant foci for state policy intervention. The three areas include:

1. Organisational restructuring modelled on a corporate managerial approach
2. Redefining teacher professionalism
3. Articulating educational outcomes in terms of national economic priorities

Chapter Two has already detailed the significance of the last point in constituting the state's response to 'raising standards'. The substance of this chapter examines the other two issues with respect to the state's role in reconstructing a new school culture. The culture of schooling is not seen to be isolated, as it "parallels a wider one concerned with the restructuring of the work-place for greater efficiency and productivity to compete in the global economy" (S Robertson: 1997, p632). A broadened comparison, in this way, highlights "a significant blurring of the boundary between public and private sectors" (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p20). Underpinning this manifestation is a belief that public institutions "must be exposed to some variant of market forces in order to bring about any fundamental cultural shift" (p85).

The following analysis highlights how New Labour's governance of the 'raising standards' agenda is directed towards a reconstruction of school culture. This notion of governance refers meaningfully to Foucault's (1981) much cited maxim 'the conduct of conduct', and specifically concerns "all endeavours to shape, guide [and]

direct the conduct of others" (Rose: 1999, p3). This *direction of conduct* predictably involves the state engaging in strategies of regulation and control over schools and the teaching profession. Such governance need not be seen to be coercive, but instead is more likely to be presented in a manner which emphasises "interdependence, divisions of knowledge, reflexive negotiation, and mutual learning" (Jessop: 1999, p356). The reconstruction of school culture remains the ultimate aim of governance - in particular, the shaping of new beliefs, values, norms of behaviour, patterns of relationship and forms of association between teacher groups (Helsby: 1999, p83). Such a reconstruction is achieved through the establishment of a 'new network paradigm' (Jessop, 1999) or a 'new regulatory framework' (S Robertson, 1999). Here, the state actively promotes structural and ideological conditions for change which underscore a decentralised system of context-steering with a stress on notions of self-organisation and self-responsibility. Thus, a new set of teacher identities and practices is privileged (S Robertson, 1999). This reconstruction is largely promoted in a singular and preconceived manner and is organised around scientific norms of truth. In essence, this represents an 'authoritative' state position (see section Four).

This chapter begins, then, by examining two forms through which the state governs the 'raising standards' agenda - a) structural regulation and b) ideological control. It is claimed that changes in school culture involve either or both forms of regulation (Robertson and Chadbourne, 1998). Section Three highlights 'managerialism' as a significant technology of governance which not only legitimates political objectives but also energises the very process of cultural change (Clarke and Newman, 1997). Following this, New Labour's adoption of a so-called 'authoritative' form of school effectiveness is revealed as the principal medium through which such change is

realised. Subsequently, section Five pertains to discussions on the manner in which professional identity is officially promoted within such an 'authoritative' framework. In conclusion, this chapter cautions against viewing the reconstruction of school culture in a deterministic mode but argues that teachers' working culture cannot stay immune from intensive structural reform.

Section One: Structural regulation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the legacy of Conservative thought remains prevalent within New Labour's approach to educational policy. Specifically, the current government presides over a regulatory system which is underpinned by neo-Liberal marketised reform. This regulatory system embodies structural arrangements evident in, for example: funding settlements, accountability mechanisms, legislated agreements on teachers' working conditions and, 'official' techniques for administration and practice. The legacy of neo-Liberal structural reform can be traced back to a significant starting point - The Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act (1987). This Act abolished teachers' negotiating rights and imposed a new contract specifying minimum working hours and duties. Further, five in-service (INSET) training days became mandatory and an incremental pay scale for managerial duties was introduced in schools. This reform symbolised a new contractual relationship between the state and teachers. The introduction of the 1988 Education Act further consolidated this new alliance. Among the stipulations of this Act included: new formula funding

proposals[30], the opportunity for schools to opt-out to become GM status, and the initiation of the LMS scheme.

In 1991 the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) was established which extended "managerial duty by financial reward, and strengthened headteacher autonomy in allocating these rewards" (Menter et al: 1997, p61). School governors, too, were free to appoint new teachers. The subsequent 1993 Act encouraged greater diversity in the school system by promoting the establishment of 'specialist' schools. The operation of National Curriculum criteria, appraisal proposals, and the publication of Ofsted reports and exam results operated concurrently with this reform. Also, throughout this period of intense change, in which regulation and marketisation operated hand-in-hand (Menter et al: 1997, Ball: 1994a, Helsby: 1999), the teacher trade union movement became seriously weakened. Moreover, the emerging discourse on 'excellence' directed itself to new conceptions of the teacher 'professional' and the 'well managed' school (this is discussed further in sections Three and Four).

Since taking office, none of these emergent state powers have been repealed by New Labour. Indeed, the 1998 Act is seen as further evidence of the intensification of state control (Bottery: 1999, McCaig: 2001). While the establishment of new regulatory mechanisms may appear to be more *formally* democratic, external pressure for accountability seems to dispirit such scope. Apple and Jungck (1992) point to curriculum planning as an example of this. Here, schools' capacity to plan and determine aspects of the curriculum is restrained by the dominance of strict accountability mechanisms, management systems, mandated curricular content and

---

[30] It is important to single out the importance of funding as a regulatory function. 'Standards' funds, for example, now operate in schools which are exclusively targeted at raising *academic* levels.

goals, as well as "a truncated vision of the 'basics'" (p22). Alternative forms of regulation (such as teacher professionalism) are discouraged by this focus on external accountability which promotes a variety of regulatory mechanisms including: new recording and reporting requirements, inspection procedures, and increased rights of information for parents and governors. This accountability structure underpins a new target-setting culture where schools are required to respond to these 'outside' pressures. Consequently, much of their 'core' business is engaged in satisfying these perceived external demands. This allows the state to evaluate the performances of schools based not only on their market position but also on their mode of operation. Accordingly, school practice is virtually standardised and there appears to be a decline in the "political tolerance of organisational diversity" (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p146).

Regulatory agencies play their part in ensuring that the state's educational programme is fully implemented. LEAs, for example, are urged to support schools in their efforts to raise standards, "intervening in their work in inverse proportion to success" (DfEE: 1997b, p4). This inverse relationship between intervention and 'success' may be seen as a way of politically elevating the state's own regulation requirements, where those schools which meet the necessary requirements are rewarded with more autonomy. Conversely, freedom is curtailed in those schools which fail the 'regulation test':

"For schools demonstrating consistent success we will provide additional freedoms, including a new light touch inspection system. For those not performing as well as they should the new arrangements in the Schools Standards and Framework Act will ensure that they receive, as early as

possible, the necessary challenge and support to set them on the road to improvement" (DfEE: 1998a, p26).

Quasi-government agencies, too, are charged with the responsibility to intervene in schools on the state's behalf[31]. Such intervention may undertake a symbolic and/or practical form. The Standards and Effectiveness Unit (SEU), for example, was established by David Blunkett in 1997 to implement the government's policies for 'raising standards' in schools. Among the Unit's key tasks include: identifying and disseminating good practice, target-setting and benchmarking, mandating that LEAs develop closer links with schools, and developing and implementing numeracy and literacy strategies. The Unit is also responsible for the innovation of a number of policy initiatives, including EAZs and the National Year of Reading. The TTA, too, is required to assist the government in its drive to raise standards. Much of its work is couched in terms of 'professional support' - whether this be in relation to recruitment, supporting training 'standards' for the Qualification of Teacher Status (QTS) and a National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), or developing a curriculum for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and a model for performance appraisal. Finally, Ofsted reinforces these sets of codified practices on teachers and effectively acts as a 'standards police force'. Its regulatory functions serve to assert pressure on schools to conform to high standards and to extract 'ineffective' practice:

[There's] "still a long way to go before pedagogic standards are as high as they should be [...] there may be some 15,000 incompetent teachers currently working in our schools" (Woodhead: 1995, p9).

---

[31] It should be noted that quasi-government agencies (by definition) can also exercise some agency in opposing 'official' policy.

This discussion draws attention to the fact that state regulation should be seen more accurately as a process of 'deregulation', where quasi-government agencies are instructed to deliver a centrally planned programme[32]. Such 'deregulation' is followed by a 're-regulation' process (S Robertson, 1999) which locates the school within a system of 'self-organising networks' (Rose, 1999). In this way, schools are expected to regulate their own activity in accordance with perceived demands made upon them:

> *"At the heart of [our] vision is the school which takes responsibility for improving itself and which challenges and works with every pupil to reach ever higher standards"* (DfEE: 1998a, p12).

This concept of self-regulation is reinforced by associative demands made within the profession itself. The General Teaching Council (GTC), for example, is charged with the duty of preparing a Code of Practice outlining appropriate professional 'standards' (including details about the conduct and role practice of teachers). This idea of self-regulation, therefore, switches the focus from external state direction to internal monitoring. The School Development Plan (SDP) may be proffered as a working example of this process at institutional level[33]. As Ball (1997a, p329) notes, it's important to see the SDP as "part of a complex web of tactics which tie the details of organisational life to the steering requirements of the state". This point draws attention to the fact that the "institutionalisation of increasingly directive and controlling mechanisms" may be intensifying (Webb and Vulliamy: 1996, p456).

---

[32] Much of quasi-government activity is reminiscent of the 'old-style bureaucratic' state where prescriptions are effected in line with pre-conceived outcome values. This represents a significant paradox within New Labour's seeming *de facto* acceptance of postmodern change, as highlighted in this chapter.

Section Two: Ideological considerations

The state engages in ideological practice when it becomes involved in:

> *"a process of articulating into a configuration, different subjects, different identities, different projects, different aspirations"* (Finlayson: 1999, p272).

Such a 'construction of unity' (Finlayson, 1999) relates to that process of state formation which seeks to legitimate a new form of 'cultural revolution' (Green: 1990). Thus, the reconstruction of school culture is derived not only through structural change but also via ideological means. As Offe (1984) argues, the state engages in ideological practice to win consent for the structures, processes and policies it delivers. In relation to 'raising standards', this means that the state employs a particular educational ideology which invokes specific cultural, political and moral values. Unlike theory, any ideological position cannot be proven or disproved (Mercer, 1995). Thus, the governance of a 'raising standards' agenda seeks to legitimate a particular ethical value position - as Rose (1999, p27) notes, "to govern, one could say, is to be condemned to seek an authority for one's authority".

In seeking authority, the state does not just *reflect* a particular way of viewing 'raising standards', but it also *produces* conditions and individual subjects commensurate to such values[34]. This productive power symbolises the 'educative and formative' functions of the state (Dale: 1989, p9). The ensuing dominant values are promoted as a form of cultural truth (or 'hegemony'). These hegemonic views are continually

---

[33] See chapter Six for a more detailed description of how the SDP is used as an instrument of 'cultural engineering' (Ball, 1997a).

[34] This point resonates the views of Gramsci and Althusser who remind us that "ideology is a practice producing subjects" (Mouffe: 1979, p187; Apple and Weis: 1983, p17).

contested as they require "the consent of the dominated majority" (Apple and Weis: 1983, p19). Thus, a particular ideological stance on 'raising standards' (see chapter Two) is likely to assume a persuasive and cogent appearance[35]. *Discourse* plays an important role in the mobilisation of hegemonic 'truths'. The following quotes illuminate this perception:

- *".. discourses are not neutral descriptions of reality but rather examples of attempts by those with some degree of authority to impose their views and interpretations upon others"* (Helsby: 1999, p3)
- *"It is the outcome of the struggle between competing vocabularies that will decide what the truth of a particular matter will be: it is power relations **rather than facts about reality which make things true**"* (du Gay: 1996, p45 - his emphases)

Within the contemporary political climate it may be argued that:

> *"the rhetorical dimension of current initiatives is a necessary feature of theoretical formulation, intended to influence public discussion and policy-making"* (Strain and Field: 1997, p141).

While it is accepted that within the political world of public relations and electoral pragmatism discourse is used in this way, it is contended here that the sociological importance of the term extends beyond this consideration. Thus, the power of language is manifest in its capacity to induce pervasive transformations in "the very 'nature' of man and the conditions and aims of his life" (Wright Mills: 1959, p20). In essence, discourse can reconstruct an individual's *consciousness* (Giroux, 1997), or

---

[35] This does not mean, however, that the state is immune from the charge that it is authoritative in its

"effect conceptual change in his or her personal beliefs" (Kagan: 1992, pp75,76). This *psychological* use for discourse is allied to a *cultural* function which has the capacity to influence individuals' day-to-day practice. Both forms of discourse are evident in New Labour's promotion of its 'raising standards' agenda. The language of reform, for example, "connotes change for-the-better" (Acker: 1999, p191) which, on the one hand, urges teachers to think differently about their job and, on the other, legitimises pervasive cultural change within the school system. This view of reform is consistent with New Labour's 'progressive' image (see chapter Two). Also, New Labour's adoption of managerial and business language serves to legitimate new organisational goals and new identities within schools. The remainder of this chapter deals specifically with this application of discourse.

The discussions presented in this section underscore the potency of discourse in transforming individuals' consciousness and the meaning and reality of their work. The state's role in discursive construction is crucial to our study inasmuch as it makes an ethereal 'raising standards' policy a tangible concern for both school and teacher. The following discussion focuses on the state's use of managerialist discourse in this respect.

Section Three: Managerialism

Discussions thus far highlight that a reconstruction of school culture may be achieved via structural and ideological means. This section now details the state's adoption of a managerialist position which incorporates both forms of regulation.

---

actions (as later analysis will contest).

Managerialism[36] draws its roots primarily in New Right thinking (Pollitt, 1993), but can also be traced to other agencies including management theorists, influential politicians on the left, and those that work in public sector organisations (Trowler: 1998, Fairly and Patterson, 1995). As a structural process, managerialism consists of a body of practical knowledge which imposes a new technical-rational culture upon schools. This culture shapes patterns of power and relationships within the organisation through its commitment to productive 'efficiency'. In addition, managerialism characterises an ideological enterprise. This is manifest in attempts to manage school culture with a view to advancing a desired state of change:

> *"Management has not just been the means through which change is to be delivered: managerialism as a discourse has energised the very process of change"* (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p39).

In this regard, managerialism has at its heart the idea that managers must be given the 'right to manage' (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p56). This elevated view of the 'manager' is integral to the theory of scientific management (or 'Taylorism'). The fundamental hypothesis of this theory is that "management plans, workers merely execute" (Apple: 1982a, p71). An attempt is made to apply the methods of science to management 'problems', such as low worker productivity (Braverman, 1974). Responsibility for the selection, training and monitoring of workers is thus passed to those in authority positions (Morgan, 1986). This is seen as part of an organisational

---

[36] Also referred to as 'new managerialism' (Cox: 1991, Gerwitz, Ball and Bowe: 1995, Robertson and Chadbourne: 1998), 'the new public sector management' (Hood, 1991), or 'new public management' (Bottery, 1996). Each of these terms, however, may give different levels of emphasis to the components of managerialist ideology (see Pollitt, 1993).

strategy to vest complete control over the labour process in the hands of the manager (Braverman: 1974, Rose: 1989). Such control need not be coercive (as illustrated in Braverman's study[37]), but instead may be subtle in its orientation. Thus, as Apple (1982b, p251) notes, "power can be 'made invisible' by incorporating it into the very structure of the work itself" (this point is returned to later in chapter Four). The role of management in delivering marketised reform likewise highlights how subtle such control may appear. Here, the state's promotion of self-steering, self-monitoring, and individual accountability (Ball, 1993) may be presented as concerned with issues of worker empowerment (S Robertson, 1997), but in reality may be nothing more than 'vertical disintegration' (Watkins, 1993). Further to this point Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998) assert that managerialism does not necessarily lead to flatter structures since "the gap between manager and managed is widening" (p11).

In conjunction with market developments in education, it is claimed that managerialism proffers a technical-rational route for creating 'public entrepreneurship' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Managerialism is legitimated alongside the market as the means through which restructuring (decentralisation, contracting, delegation etc.) can take place. In essence, marketisation leads to the enhancement of management strategies (Menter et al: 1997), and the emergent methods are legitimated on the grounds that they simply reflect the wider changing external environment. In this way:

> *"the most potent underpinning of managerialism [is the] perception that, for any particular organisation, there is no alternative"* (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p78).

---

[37] Braverman extensively used coercive imagery for management's control over labour - "the production units operate like a hand, watched, corrected, and controlled by a distant brain" (1974,

This view is consistent with New Labour's *progressive* image and its seeming *de facto* acceptance of postmodern change (as outlined earlier).

Within New Labour's approach to 'raising standards' there is a manifest appreciation of a Taylorist emphasis on the 'right to manage':

> *"We need to develop strong leaders, reward them well and give them freedom to manage, without losing accountability"* (DfEE: 1998a, p6).

The qualifying constraint on the 'right to manage' is, as the above quote informs, accountability. Here, school leaders are held accountable for existing failure in the system: "Ofsted findings imply that up to one in seven of our schools is not well led" (DfEE: 1998a, p29). School leaders are also accountable for what they deliver in response to such 'failure', since there's consequential pressure on them to adopt new *progressive* strategies for management. The National College for School Leadership may be proffered as a significant managerialist strategy aimed at re-regulating school leadership practice (DfEE, 2000b). Here, a *prescriptive* usage of the term 'professionalism' is practised by government as it seeks "to gain an occupation's acceptance of a particular policy by appealing to its professional responsibilities" (Hoyle: 1983, p44). Thus, as managerialism becomes increasingly tied to notions of organisational effectiveness and performance criteria, the concept of professionalism becomes reconstructed in its wake. On a practical level, teachers' work begins to entail greater levels of managerial organisation as they become "managers of learning, managers of records and schemes, and managers of outputs (adding value)" (S Robertson: 1999, p128). Discourse, too, plays a significant ideological role in the reconstruction of professionalism:

---

p125). This imagery owes a lot to his study of industrial work and his orthodox Marxist beliefs.

"The changing vocabulary of 'initial teacher training' (rather than education), 'training days', 'delivery' of teaching, 'inspection', 'performance appraisal' and 'competency' together with increased stress levels bears testimony to the changing operational definition of professionalism" (Day: 1997, p44)[38].

The 'expert metaphor' (see last chapter) is instrumental in this reconstruction. Underpinning this idea is the assumption that, not only is there something wrong with the current profession, but that it can be rectified. The requisite knowledge and skill which is used to accomplish this 'fix' is often perceived to lie with specialised 'experts' in the world of business (Westbrook and Seay: 1992, pp11,12). This is manifest, for example, in the DfEE's tendering out of research to private management consultancies. Most recently, at a cost exceeding four million pounds, Hay McBer were commissioned by the DfEE to detail the characteristics and skills of 'effective' teachers (TES: May 12, 2000). It is interesting to note that neither universities nor teacher unions were approached about this research[39], thus pointing to the state's seeming commitment to redefine teacher professionalism through new directions.

Managerialism represents a significant 'technology of government' in the drive to 'raise standards'. By this, the state actively uses technical-rational strategies to 'guide the action of others'. Thus, managerialism represents "the technical means by which new political objectives are accomplished" (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p36). Here, the state is not just concerned with matters of organisational effectiveness, but also

---

[38] Given this reconstruction, it now seems ironic that Labour once criticised the Conservatives for a "narrow framework for education" (Labour Party:1989, p9).

[39] On this point, Nigel De Gruchy (secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers) poignantly states: "We could have told them [the government] what makes a good teacher for nothing" (TES: May 12, 2000).

with "the managerialisation of the policy domain itself" (p148). This means that the state engages in 'managerialised politics' whereby it attempts to influence how policy itself is deliberated upon and shaped. Hence, a thoroughly politicised project is presented. With this proposition, the mechanics of school management serve to proffer a 'technical fix' (Hargreaves and Evans, 1997) to the narrowly defined 'problem' of low academic standards. The ameliorative discourse "combines description of *what is* with prescription of what *should be*" (Helsby: 1999, p12 - her emphases). Such discourse, however, focuses on narrow descriptions of schooling without due regard for wider research or alternative dimensions of change. Consequently, it is intently rooted in a 'policy science' approach (Grace, 1995).

It is helpful at this stage to review the core values and ideas of managerialism:

- management is seen as crucial for organisational and social amelioration: managers should have the right to manage
- there is an orientation towards the customer and the 'market' rather than the producer
- there is an emphasis on individualism and an acceptance of the status quo
- a 'policy science' (Grace, 1995) approach to the understanding of policy-making and policy implementation is adopted
- the management of change is seen primarily as a top-down activity
- staff in an organisation are seen as relatively easily 'managed' through clear procedures which take well-understood patterns of motivation into account. In short there is perceived to be a clear and improving 'technology' of management

- in education, an atomistic and mechanistic understanding of knowledge and learning is adopted

[source: Randle and Brady: 1997 in Trowler: 1998, pp93,94]

Discussions presented in this section have elaborated on some of the points listed above. The remainder of this chapter develops these and draws attention to other managerialist features which are highlighted here.

Before concluding this section, it is worth mentioning that a number of variants of managerialism arise out of the 'ideological' roots listed above (Pollitt: 1993, p188 cited in Trowler: 1998, p94). Among these include: neo-Taylorism, competency managerial approaches and 'new public management'. Such variants can be understood in relation to each other but can also be distinguished by the different levels of emphasis they attribute to the various components of managerialism, listed above (see Trow, 1994).

Section Four: Authoritative school effectiveness

The following discussion pertains to the state's adoption of an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness in its promotion of a 'raising standards' agenda. Such an 'authoritative' model represents a variant of managerialism. Moreover, in addition to reflecting the principles of managerialism it is contended that, separately, this model impels a process of pedagogical change. In this way, a form of political rationality is presented with a view to reshaping the conceptual focus and culture of schooling. Rose (1999, pp26,27) asserts that this idea of a 'political rationality' is characterised

by three regularities - it reveals a distinct *moral* appearance, a unique *epistemological* character and a discrete *idiom* or language form. It is claimed here that an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness integrates all three characteristics in a coherent logic. Thus, an 'authoritative' model is intrinsically linked to the moral crusade of 'raising standards' (see chapter Two). Also, on an epistemological level, such a model is articulated in relation to a particular understanding of the purposes of schooling and the nature of the teacher's role. And finally, a distinctive idiom is espoused which vocalises the thought processes and political intent of government. Discussions in this chapter, and particularly on managerialism (which itself is a form of political rationality), have already pointed to the value of these points. The purpose of the following discussion, however, is to develop these further with a view to understanding how transformations in school culture are ascribed to school effectiveness factors. It is claimed that a so-called 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness provides the *educational* underpinning for managerialist change. Hence, this model represents the main medium through which the 'raising standards' agenda is effected in schools.

School effectiveness work such as the Coleman (US) and Plowden (UK) Reports in the 1960s, reiterated the views of many at the time - that schools had little effect on the life chances of their pupils. This belief remained largely unchallenged until the 1980s when "schools became viewed upon as self-improving agencies" (Thrupp: 1999, p19). Accordingly, the school effectiveness movement became attractive to politicians and policy-makers as schools were seen as the main areas of responsibility for improvements in 'standards'. Michael Barber, then a leading school effectiveness

proponent and now Head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit at the DfEE, endorses this perspective:

> *"It is [..] the responsibility of government to hold schools to account through inspection and other means and to intervene where there is evidence of underperformance. It is no exaggeration to say that this policy is founded on the work of researchers in school effectiveness and school improvement over the last twenty years"*[40] (in Sammons et al: 1997, preface).

This particular view of school effectiveness attempts to promote the belief that the characteristics of the 'effective school' must underpin and inform the 'improving school' (Rea and Weiner: 1998, p26)[41]. In practice, this means that "the terms 'school effects' and 'school effectiveness' are sometimes used interchangeably" (Ribbins and Burridge, 1994). Here, 'school effects' "refers to the impact particular schools have on their pupils' educational outcomes" (both quotes, p36). This emphasis on 'school effects' operates concurrently with a focus on 'teacher effects' which is primarily concerned with the statistical explanation of variances between pupils' educational outcomes (Kyriacou, 1986). Both concepts serve to elevate the importance of educational outcomes which remain "the fundamental criteria for determining school effectiveness" (Sammons et al: 1997, p6).

As a direct consequence of this focus on educational outcomes and school accountability, politicians and policy-makers have utilised school effectiveness research to legitimate their own ideological claims on how schools should improve. It is claimed here that, in conjunction with this politicisation of research, New Labour

---

[40] It is interesting to note the omission of the earlier studies mentioned - the 1980s is seen by Barber as the foundation period of school effectiveness research.

advances an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness. This model is not representative of the wider work of the school effectiveness movement. Many school effectiveness researchers, for example, challenge the singular focus on raw exam results (Sammons et al, 1997). They also point to the fact that political expediency is sometimes conflated with research issues and that this lies outside the control of the movement (e.g. Sammons and Reynolds, 1997). While these points may be valid, it is evident that school effectiveness research is thoroughly implicated in politicised reform. It may be argued that a politicised form of school effectiveness gains support not just from a minority of proponents within the movement, but also from those that do not publicly reject its claims. Hence, while there are contentious differences of opinion within the movement itself (to be discussed later), some support for an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness fulfils the educational rationale for a managerialist 'raising standards' agenda.

It is claimed here that a so-called 'authoritative' model exhibits the following integrative features:

- it is managerialist in its orientation and promotes a principal faith in systems-based change and leadership expertise
- the model is normative - prescriptive in its presentation and acritical in its application
- the model promotes education as a technical enterprise - this has implications for the way schooling is perceived and notions of 'effectiveness' are advanced

---

[41] This is despite the fact that the school effectiveness and school improvement movements derive from two distinctive paradigms.

Previous discussions on managerialism have highlighted the importance of leadership in effecting systems-based reform. Within an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness, leadership is viewed upon as a diffuse concept. Teachers at all levels can contribute to whole school development, but only in accordance with the views of 'higher' authority:

> *"We want to offer schools freedom to recognise leadership by other teachers who help the head give strategic direction in schools"* (DfEE, 1998a).

A system of managerial responsibilities is in place to reward teachers for becoming 'mini school leaders'. For example, in conjunction with demands for concentrating on the 'core' business, many secondary schools now have deputy heads for assessment (DHAs), as well as Heads of 'Key Stage' groups. Strategic leadership in this regard allows the government to carry out its policies and assess the performance of the education system:

> *"There is no education system in the world as rich in data as this one. National assessment at the end of each key stage and the analysis by the Department for Education and Employment and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority provides unrivalled insight into the performance of the system. Our researchers lead the world in data analysis"* (Michael Barber: TES June 26, 1998).

The emphases on managerial gradation and performance assessment highlights a considerable faith in *systems* which are intended to deliver curriculum and instructional change in schools (Elliott, 1996). Leadership concepts are drawn from best practice 'outside' education to induce such systems-based change. These concepts relate more to technical-rational approaches (such as performance-related measurement) than to

human personnel and staff development issues. Even when derived leadership strategies are aimed at the latter (such as the emergence of the Investors in People scheme), they often represent a significant form of surveillance and control over teachers (Menter et al, 1997). This indicates that 'mini leaders' remain entrenched in the hierarchical pecking order of the school:

> *".. the overall thrust of the new managerial professionalism is to strengthen the position of headteachers **against** school governors and over classroom teachers"* (Hatcher: 1994, p59 - his emphasis).

A second feature of the 'authoritative' school effectiveness model is that it is, by nature, normative. Here, a form of 'normalizing judgement' (Broadfoot, 1996) is used to reconstruct school practice and teacher identity in line with pre-ordained value-systems. 'Normalizing judgements' are made in accordance with the increased dominance of a 'technological rationality'. By this, the state relies less "on the play of market forces in the system and more on the installation of an all-pervasive technology to achieve desired outcomes" (Hatcher: 1998, p490)[42]. Numerous prescriptions on 'effective' school and teacher practice are indicative of this technology of control. Such prescriptions, while articulated in line with "the political process of the commodification of education" (Ball: 1998, p74), moreover proffer a "leap from establishing that schools *could* make a difference to a recipe as to how schools *should* improve" (Lauder, Jamieson and Wikeley: 1998, p57 - their emphases). This stress on prescription is underpinned by New Labour's authoritative use of an ideal language form. The assertion that "there will be zero tolerance of underperformance" (DfEE:

---

[42] This phenomenon is recognised within New Labour's educational approach and represents a form of discourse which Hatcher refers to as 'Official School Improvement' (see Hatcher, 1998).

1997a, p5) embodies this language form and reinforces the belief that strong state action will remove 'failure' within the system. The 'politics of blame' (Thrupp, 1999) is employed and acts as a catalyst for cultural change. Such an ideal language form is characteristic of High Reliability Organisations (Stringfield: 1995, 1996, Reynolds: 1998) which exemplify an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness. Within the theory of High Reliability Organisations (HROs), the 'politics of blame' is clearly discernible:

> *"Schools are no longer afforded the luxury of blaming the students and their families for students' failures"* (Stringfield: 1995, pp82,83).

A rhetorical appeal to schools to operate within near-perfect systems of organisation is also generated. The twelve 'effective' characteristics of High Reliability Schools (HRS), for example, are presented in prescriptive form and claim to have the capacity to eliminate all pupils' underachievement (see Stringfield: 1995, pp83-93). 'Failure' within the school system is presented as 'not an option' and is naively depicted as analogous with 'similar disasters' in nuclear plants and air traffic control towers! Such "asociological judgements", to use Ball's (1998, p79) phrase, simplify the complexity of schooling and overstate the conceivable influence of the teacher.

These ill judgements are given further credence by the acritical application of 'authoritative' school effectiveness results. It is claimed here that proponents of the 'authoritative' position fail to address the wider concerns of the school effectiveness movement. In particular, it is noticeable that a number of school effectiveness researchers vary in their authority claims over research findings (see Thrupp: 1999, pp162-175). Thus, a minority present results in an unproblematic manner and, in doing so, facilitate (inadvertedly, or otherwise) complementary conditions for

increased levels of politicisation in school effectiveness research. Even when results are problematised, 'authoritative' interpretations may still prevail. Take the work of Sammons et al (1995), which was commissioned by Ofsted to "provide an analysis of the key determinants of school effectiveness in secondary and primary schools" (p1). Here, the authors of the study clearly problematise their main findings[43]:

> *"We note the caution in interpreting findings concerning 'key determinants' of effectiveness based on evidence much of which, in the early research, is derived from studies of the characteristics of small numbers of outlier schools (selected as either highly effective or highly ineffective)"* (Sammons et al: 1995, p1).

Despite these expressed concerns, politicians and policy-makers working within an 'authoritative' framework have interpreted the study's results in a thoroughly utilitarian fashion. Here, the eleven key school effectiveness determinants identified in Sammons et al's (1995) work have sometimes been cited as a recipe format for improved practice (Goldstein, 1999). As mentioned in section Three, this serves a managerialist agenda well in its quest to effect significant cultural change. The problem with such an 'authoritative' interpretation, however, is that (at the outset) it fails to take account of the social limits of reform (as outlined in chapter Two). Thrupp (1999, p5) elaborates further on this point by addressing three objections to an accepted view of school effectiveness. These points may translate to a part-critique of 'authoritative' models:

---

[43] The authors, however, may be accused of overplaying the role of the school when they state that "..although background factors are important, schools can have a significant impact" (Sammons et al:1995, p2). This 'significant impact' is toned down by established school effectiveness research which asserts that 'school effects' are statistically minimal - estimated at between 12% and 18% (Creemers, 1994).

1. 'school effects' may not reflect a school's effectiveness at all, but continue to be indirectly related to student body characteristics by way of school processes that are influenced by *school mix* (social class composition, socio-economic levels, varying ability ranges, cultural capital factors etc.)
2. many effectiveness factors are hard to replicate. This is because while they may be *school-based*, they may nevertheless not be *school-caused*
3. effectiveness and improvement literature view notions of school 'ethos', 'climate' and 'culture' as organisational features, but it is contended that they also reflect school mix

In addition, other problems emerge because, despite its title, an 'authoritative' position is borne out of a school effectiveness movement which is characterised by fragmentation and dispute. Here, a number of contentious issues remain unresolved. Many researchers recognise such questionable features but, significantly, it is contended that those proponents of the 'authoritative' position inadequately problematise these and persist in obscuring their significance. Ribbins and Burridge (1994, pp21-23) highlight multifarious problems attached to school effectiveness research:

- only 8-15% of the variation in pupil outcomes are due to between-school differences
- school performance can vary quite rapidly over two or three years
- there is a substantial range of 'effectiveness' within schools across departments

- what is considered 'effective' may vary in accordance with the context of the social environment of the school's catchment area, with the stage of development of the school itself, and with the particular outcome measure being considered
- there is no cross-cultural agreement on what makes schools 'effective'

The above deep-rooted problems draw into question the 'authoritative' (i.e. almost 'certain') stance taken by proponents. This highlights the contradictory nature of the 'authoritative' position. For example, as New Labour engages with school effectiveness to legitimate (on educational grounds) its managerialist agenda, it simultaneously attempts to reconcile educational uncertainty with political expediency. Thus, for example, while New Labour recognises the need for positive discrimination in terms of resources for low socio-economic status schools, it still persists in promoting a 'standardisation of standards' policy (see chapter Two) which disadvantages those same institutions. Hence, the 'authoritative' image is softened (to some degree) and intensified at once. Also, in relation to the theory of High Reliability Schools, there is on the one hand the desire to engineer cultural change through 'authoritative' means and, on the other, a recognition (albeit, somewhat muted) that applying knowledge in this way is limited. This contradictory position is evident in David Reynolds' (a leading HRS proponent)[44] views:

> *"..in many ways our knowledge of what makes a 'good' school greatly exceeds our knowledge of how to apply that knowledge in programmes of school improvement to make schools 'good'"* (Reynolds and Creemers: 1990, p2).

While such contradictions remain evident, they are nevertheless *played down* within an 'authoritative' position. This is because the predominant principle guiding any 'authoritative' model is that it is, by nature, normative. Thus, in its promotion of competitive educational values, the 'authoritative' position itself becomes couched in scientific norms of truth. In essence, this means that its own competitive location as the leading model of school effectiveness is fostered. Complexity is therefore understated and a false lucidity is approved. Consequently, the model becomes prescriptive and, by association, it remains acritical in its application. In the words of Oakeshott (1967, p31), "it has no homeopathic quality".

Discussions presented in this section have pointed to the fact that school effectiveness characteristics cannot be seen in isolation from real attempts at cultural improvement (Ribbins and Burridge, 1994). Consequently, New Labour's adoption of an 'authoritative' stance is closely bound up with more fundamental questions about the nature of education. Specifically, it is claimed here that, within this perspective, education is promoted as a technical enterprise. Central to this proposal is the rationalist assumption that there exists *a priori* a body of scientific knowledge which informs good teaching (see D Reynolds in TES: Aug 13, 1999). A further assumption lies with the view that teachers should be discouraged from taking control over appropriate instruction methods. Instead, authority is passed to 'external' experts, thus endorsing the fundamental proposition of Taylorism - 'the right of managers to manage'. Here, a low-trust professional model is seen to prevail and any credible alternative is dismissed as unscientific. While Michael Barber (Head of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit, DfEE) may not profess to endorse such a low-trust model, his

---

[44] Interestingly, David Reynolds is also chair of the government's new Numeracy Task Force.

own 'professional judgement' outlined here renders past 'traditional' models as ineffective and obsolete:

> *"Professional judgement is good but it has to be based on knowledge and understanding of what is best practice. In the past teachers have been left to guess"* (Barber, Guardian Education: March 31, 1998).

It is claimed here that an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness disempowers teachers by redefining their role as 'technical operatives' (Elliott, 1996). Within this proposition, teachers become responsible for delivering 'technical knowledge' in schools. By definition, this type of knowledge ranges "between an identifiable point [..] and an identifiable terminal point, where it is complete" (Oakeshott: 1967, p11). Hence, a 'banking' concept of education is espoused (Freire, 1996) which befits the needs of an 'authoritative' managerialist agenda. In practice, this type of knowledge is discernible in the Literacy Hour scheme at primary school level. Also in the secondary sector, the increasing pressure to achieve higher exam results lends itself to the technical 'delivery' of academic programmes. Thus, syllabuses and schemes of work which reflect National Curriculum guidelines are delivered according to clear definable outcomes. The promotion of technical knowledge in this manner continues to influence all areas of educational policy (TES: Aug 27, 1999), and reflects New Labour's particular ideological commitment to education.

Such an ideological position is highly contestable, however. Even traditional supporters of Labour policy have refuted the government's 'authoritative' position in this regard. The Institute of Public Policy Research (an influential think-tank of the Labour Party), for example, warns against excessive central prescription and the ill

effects on teachers in schools. In particular, it points to the danger that teachers now appear reluctant to take risks and be innovative in the classroom (TES: March 17, 2000). New Labour's ideological dogma is also challenged by an opposing theory of education. This theory, which is understood in relation to *humanistic* concerns, can be contrasted with a technical definition of education (see figure II below):

Figure II: Contrasting Models of Education

Technical Model of Education	Humanistic Model of Education
The act of teaching is depicted as a set of engineering or technical skills - the teacher is a 'technician'	The act of teaching is depicted as a 'craft' (Lortie, 1975) - the teacher self-develops his/her skill
Education is to do with the acquisition of technical knowledge	Education is to do "with educing, with releasing, with liberating" (Abbs: 1994, p14)
Knowledge is technical - it can be objectified, narrowly measured and transferred	Knowledge is subjective, has multifarious product variables and is co-constructed
Knowledge exists as an *a priori* body of facts - pupils are *trained* to receive knowledge	Knowledge is dialectically created - pupils are *educated* through a shared medium
Knowledge outcomes are *best* represented as measures of intellectual attainment in tests and examinations	Knowledge outcomes are only *partly* represented by measures of intellectual attainment in tests and examinations

From the above figure, it is noticeable that the technical model fails to recognise the complexity of schools as organisations set within unique social, cultural and economic contexts. Also, the humanistic description of schools as loosely-coupled organisations lies in direct conflict with the simple technical-rational image promoted by an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness. Within both paradigms the notion of 'teacher effectiveness' is treated oppositely. The humanistic model views the criteria

of teacher effectiveness as "notoriously elusive" (Jackson: 1968, p116). Whereas within a technical perspective, teacher effectiveness is narrowly defined by the relative ability of the producer "to satisfy the preferences of the enterprising consumer" (du Gay: 1996, p77). Presently, we are witnessing a transformation of views on teacher 'effectiveness' from a humanistic stance towards the consolidation of a new technical perspective. The outlook of government less than two decades ago illustrates this dramatic shift in thought:

> *"..personality, character and commitment are as important as the specific knowledge and skills that are used in the day to day tasks of teaching"* (DES, 1983).

The following section now analyses how the adoption of an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness is instrumental in shaping teachers' identity. In conjunction with the points mentioned here about New Labour's technical approach to education, it examines how teachers are expected to respond to demands for the delivery of 'de-contextualised knowledge' (Wells: 1998, Meadows: 1998). This represents a crucial source of enquiry since, from the state's perspective, teachers are considered to be central to any proposed reconstruction of school culture. With respect to our main research study, this analysis helps to focus on the manner in which perceived notions of teacher 'effectiveness' affect issues of teacher identity in schools.

Section Five: Aspects of identity

> *"Every technology [..] requires the inculcation of a form of life, the reshaping of various roles for humans, the little body techniques required to use the devices, new inscription practices, the mental techniques required to think in terms of certain practices of communication....."* (Rose: 1999, p52).

The above quote highlights that forms of 'technology'[45] require for their completion a certain shaping of conduct. This implies, from an 'authoritative' perspective, that *completion* depends on the model's capacity to reconstruct teachers' identity in correlation with its own value-systems. Attempts are therefore made to fuse the organisation's goals (which are predetermined) with those of its members. While it is in every school's benefit to engage its members' interests, it is claimed here that an 'authoritative' stance imposes its control over this arrangement. Specifically, an 'authoritative' model prescribes what the organisation's goals should be and then sublimates these objectives at the expense of individual members' interests. This form of determined control is aimed at the colonisation of the 'hearts and minds' (Wilmott, 1993) of teachers. As mentioned earlier in the chapter (in relation to discussions on ideology), such control need not be seen solely in coercive terms. Instead, attempts at fusing organisational and members' interests may involve stimulating subjectivity, "..promoting self-inspection and self-consciousness, [and] shaping desires.." (Rose: 1989, p4). Hence, the promotion of an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness is likely to encompass a form of persuasive ideological hegemony.

---

[45] 'Technology' is used generally here to refer to the means by which 'thoughts and/or actions are conducted'. It is inextricably linked to issues of governance, and thus relates to particular projects of

'Authoritative' models are managerialist in orientation and promote a principal faith in systems-based change and leadership expertise (see section Four). Attempts to fuse organisational and members' interests are thus based on these principles. The appraisal scheme, for example, emphasises the importance of managerial goals:

> *"It is becoming clear that appraisal is most effective where it is integrated with a school's management processes. It means that teachers' agreed objectives can link sensibly with schools' targets.."* (Estelle Morris: DfEE, 1998a, p35).

This represents a shift in appraisal focus, from an ideal which fosters the self-development of teachers towards a managerialist accountability model. Thus, from an 'authoritative' perspective, staff development becomes more concerned with issues relating to 'teacher effects':

> *"We propose that, in future, appraisal should:*
>
> - *take pupil progress into account and*
> - *result in the setting of individual targets for each teacher, at least one of which should be directly linked to the school's pupil performance targets"* (DfEE: 1998a, p35).

Such an appraisal focus proffers the opportunity for management to judge the 'effectiveness' of teachers using technical criteria. 'Key milestone' outcomes (DfEE: 1998a, p45), such as Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Induction appraisal, and the Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) scheme, are indicative of supplementary managerial power in the performance assessment of teachers.

---

control which set out to shape the conduct of others. In the context of this chapter, 'technology' refers to the means by which 'authoritative' principles of school effectiveness are promoted.

In line with this ideological struggle to reconstruct teachers' identity, the state sets out to consolidate its 'authoritative' position by advancing new professional principles. These principles are presented in an ameliorative light as they seek betterment in salary (DfEE, 1999c) and status (DfEE, 1997a) conditions. The essence of these proposals however is that, in the words of Hoyle (1974, p13), they are aimed at reshaping the "knowledge, skill and procedures employed by teachers in the process of teaching". In this way, teacher professionalism can only be understood in relation to the contemporary policy context. An 'authoritative' position, it is claimed here, seeks to embrace teacher professionalism as a means of 'occupational control' (Menter et al, 1997). Such control attempts to govern not only teachers' working routines but also their 'unseen' practices in the classroom (S Robertson, 1999). Discourse is an important ideological tool in this regard (as highlighted in section Two):

- *"..the role of language is crucial to the process of social communication, and to the emergence of the self and the subjective attitude"* (du Gay: 1996, pp28,29).
- *"We do not speak a discourse, it speaks us. We are the subjectivities, the voices, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows"* (Ball: 1994a, p22 - his emphasis).

It is claimed that teachers' traditional concerns for values such as equity and teaching processes are being replaced by the language of the 'new professionalism' (S Robertson, 1996). This new-fashioned language speaks of:

> *"..outputs, performance, added-value, choice, markets, quality, competencies, excellence, flexibility, deregulation and school-business partnerships"* (S Robertson: 1996, p28).

Such discourse is unproblematically amalgamated with traditional forms, making both value-systems almost referentially synonymous. Consequently, it has been argued that old value systems (such as equity) fail to be overtly reflected upon and treated as an individually significant concern (see O'Brien, 1998).

'New professionalism' discourse establishes the manager at the helm of performance assessment procedures in schools. Thus, individual teachers' identity, their perceived 'effectiveness' in the job, as well as their bargaining and negotiating rights, are increasingly subject to intensified managerial judgement. The focus on management-teacher relations, in this regard, is concentrated at the expense of traditional associations, such as teacher-union alliances. Consequently, teachers are increasingly obliged to rethink their practice in line with managerial objectives and demands. Thus, while direct channels of communication between managers and workers become more entrenched and individualised (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p72), teachers are forced to compete for new reward systems in schools. The AST scheme, which identifies "the most effective teachers" (DfEE: 1999c, p7) in schools, proffers the scope for teachers to individually access such a new reward system. This scheme is consistent with New Labour's commitment to the 'expert metaphor' which constitutes that "teachers should learn on the job and from the best" (DfEE: 2000b, p3). Arguably, however, such a scheme infuses a culture of individualism among staff, as teachers compete to enlist in a new competitive order[46]. This order establishes new managerial positions at teaching level, ensuring that some professionals will gain access to higher levels of status and salary. It is possible, therefore, to evisage the emergence of new power differentials

[46] Further, due to new threshold payment arrangements, all teachers have the opportunity for salary gains if they demonstrate 'competence' after seven years experience.

which reflect a type of 'institutional bias' (Pollard, 1982) whereby certain 'experts' will continue to mirror many of the routines and practices of the school. Teachers' identity will be affected in accordance with their relative placement along this new divisional power structure:

> *"[an individual's] sense of who he or she is is constituted and confirmed through his or her positioning within particular relations of power"* (du Gay: 1996, p63).

Further to the above point, it is claimed here that teachers' individual identity is not just affected by the establishment of formal structures of power (such as the AST scheme and new performance related pay proposals), but is also influenced by the resultant "effect of the operation of social relationships between groups and individuals" (Broadfoot: 1996, p96). This draws attention to an 'authoritative' model's scope for influencing both the thoughts and practice of teachers. Specifically, the 'dispersal of managerial consciousness' (Clarke and Newman, 1997) highlights the manner in which the organisation's purposes are increasingly assimilated in the thoughts and practices of workers. Here, teachers begin to evaluate their own performances according to the perceived demands made upon them by the organisation. In essence, a process of self-regulation is induced through pervasive 'outside' attempts to regulate the 'self'. As Broadfoot (1996, pp95,96) notes, this reflects the Benthamite notion of 'panoptic' surveillance

> *"in which individuals learn to judge themselves as if some external eye was constantly monitoring their performance, [encouraging] the internalization of*

the evaluative criteria of those in power, and hence [providing] a new basis for social control".

Thus, the focus on self-regulation emphasises the individual role of the teacher in reconstructing his/her own professional identity. This invokes the need for *responsibility*, rather than compliance:

"Technologies of subjectivity [..] exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship with what one might term 'techniques of the self' [...] through self-inspection, self-problematization, self-monitoring and confession, we evaluate ourselves according to the criteria provided for us by others" (Rose: 1989, pp10,11).

The above discussion points to the powerful influence of 'outside' politics in the regulation of teachers' own thoughts and practice. The emergence of a new language of 'consumer culture' is central to this link between external authority and individual identity. This new discourse brooks

"no opposition between the mode of self-presentation and self-understanding of people as consumers and that required of people as employees" (du Gay: 1996, p6).

Such language elevates the perceived needs of the consumer and serves to transform the internal culture of the organisation. Concomitantly, individual workers are increasingly obliged to see their role in correspondence with consumer values:

"In effect, workers are encouraged to view work as consumers: work becomes an arena in which people exhibit an 'enterprising' or 'consuming'

relationship to self, where they make a style of living that will maximise the worth of their existence to themselves" (du Gay: 1996, p78 - his emphasis).

The manner in which teachers regulate their 'self' is also construed in terms of how they relate to each other. In effect, as du Gay (1996, p78) highlights, "employees become each other's customers". In terms of the contemporary school context, this points to the probability that social relations are intensively becoming client-based. Thus, management-teacher communications may, for example, be consumed by references to pupil groups' needs, specifically in relation to academic matters. The increasing pressure on teachers to adjudge their own (and others') 'effectiveness' according to narrowly defined technical criteria (such as academic results) may also be discernible. As a direct consequence of these trends, there appears a reconstitution of teachers' identity in line with new consumer demands.

Conclusion

The last section highlights the notion of teacher identity as a non-exclusive private domain, and one which remains intensively governed. As Rose (1989, p1) confirms:

"Thoughts, feelings and actions may appear as the very fabric and constitution of the intimate self, but they are socially organised and managed in minute particulars".

In relation to this study, it is claimed that at the heart of the 'raising standards' agenda there is a fundamental concern with, what du Gay (1996, p63) refers to as, "the production and regulation of work-based subjectivities". In recognising this, however,

I do not wish to present the image of the teacher as being wholly determined - he/she cannot be located as "merely a piece of the institution" (Jackson: 1968, p155). Symbolic interactionists would argue (and quite correctly in this case) that such a deterministic stance constitutes a false representation for teachers' identity. It is accepted here that teachers are individuals with distinct views (Jackson: 1968, Lortie: 1975, Nias: 1989) and that their background and life experiences contribute greatly to their unique sense of 'self' (Goodson, 1992). Thus, as Rose (1999, p40) admits:

> *"..there is no universal object, the governed, in relation to which a body of governors proceeds to act. The governed vary over time; indeed there is no such thing as 'the governed', only multiple objectifications of those over whom government is to be exercised, and whose characteristics government must harness and instrumentalise".*

Dale (1989, pp16,17) corroborates this position on teachers' individuality:

> *"Teachers are not merely 'state functionaries' but do have some degree of autonomy, and [this] autonomy will not necessarily be used to further the proclaimed ends of the state apparatus".*

Thus, it is clear from the above sentiments that an official 'raising standards' agenda will always be contested by *individuals*. This reflects the perception that teachers model and develop (at least to some degree) their own professional views and identity (Wright Mills: 1959, Langford: 1978, Kagan: 1992). Likewise schools, as institutions comprising of a group of individuals, have the capacity to resist macro changes to their working culture.

Whilst recognising these important points about teachers' individuality and their capacity for collective action, this chapter nevertheless points to significant macro influences in the construction of a new school culture. Specifically, it draws attention to important structural, ideological and political aspects of policy which limit the margin for teachers' determination over their work (S Robertson, 1997). It follows that teachers' work culture cannot stay immune from the increasing intensity of such policy reform. As Helsby (1999, p167) notes:

> *"The reforms have been so extensive and thorough that they have changed in fundamental ways the frameworks and structures with which teachers operate and, in so doing, have challenged the very nature of their work".*

The role of an interventionist 'authoritative' state is instrumental in creating new conditions for teachers' work. It is claimed here that the associative 'progressive' image (see chapter Two) of change may, in A Hargreaves words,

> *"lead the teacher's voice that doubts the change or disagrees with it to go unheard, be silenced, or be dismissed as 'mere' resistance"* (A Hargreaves: 1994a, p249).

Further, as discussions in this chapter highlight, the teacher's voice may be skilfully 'co-opted' (Derber, 1982) by attempts to fuse the organisation's goals with those of the individual. In this way, teachers' individuality and their capacity for resistance are weakened during the administration of a 'raising standards' agenda.

These discussions highlight that while individuals have the capacity to create their own reality[47], such reality can also be created for them (despite teachers' awareness of this fact). This signifies the dialectical relationship between structure and individuals, whereby identity is *dislocated* in so far as it

> *"depends on an outside which both denies that identity and provides the conditions of its possibility at the same time"* (Laclau: 1990, p39).

In relation to this research study, it is envisaged that this notion of dislocation will manifest itself in teachers' varying responses to the 'raising standards' agenda. To some, their role identities will be compromised by the new structural arrangements; to others, these conditions may create a fresh sense of role identity and; to more, there may be no sense in which their role identity will have changed. Part Four of this study will illuminate further on these claims.

Regardless of such differences between individuals' responses to the 'raising standards' agenda, it is argued that *all* teachers are affected (at least to a significant degree) by macro changes to school culture, as outlined here. Chapter Four now develops this claim as it sets out to delineate important contemporary transformations in teachers' work culture.

---

[47] Freire (1996) refers to this capacity as the 'ontological vocation' of man.

Chapter Four: Transformations in Teachers' Work culture

"Government cannot legislate to raise educational standards: it is, though some of us who work outside schools often forget this, only teachers in classrooms who can really make the difference" (Woodhead: 1995, p14).

Introduction

Teachers' work is subject to constant change. Within the contemporary context, teachers are expected to meet the needs of special education pupils in mainstream classes, respond to regular curriculum revisions, assessment strategies and general initiatives, and consult more widely with parents and various outside agencies (A Hargreaves, 1994a). Further, their managerial duties have expanded in line with increased systems-based changes to the workplace. All of these transformations serve to consolidate the uncertain and diffuse nature of the teacher's role within the UK context (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1993). The subjection of the teacher's role to persistent change is inextricably linked to the structural and ideological transformations which have taken place at macro level, as outlined in chapter Three. This proposition is not to deny, however, that schools have relative autonomy (Apple, 1982a) and, specifically, that macro changes may have inconsistent and contradictory responses among teachers as a group. From a policy construction perspective alone, Ball (1994b) reminds us that official policy texts are reproduced and mediated in diverse ways by schools and their teachers. Moreover, from an ontological and a philosophical point of view, recognising that teachers have relative autonomy makes important

assumptions about the real power of individual subjectivity. This point (which is referred to again in section Two) highlights the fact that schools are social arenas consisting of a "unity of interacting personalities" (Waller: 1965, p4). Hence, teachers are perceived as more than mere units of cultural reproduction.

The relative autonomy of teachers is, however, only understood in relation to the conceptual stress on the term 'relative'. While there exists the capacity for individual agency, teachers continue to be intensively *governed*. As highlighted in the last chapter, such governance is manifest not only in new structural arrangements but also in ideological appeals to teachers' sense of professionalism (via the promotion of an 'authoritative' school effectiveness agenda[48]). Thus, the school (and the teacher's role within) is continually subject to pervasive external constraints. As Grace (1978, pp1,2) notes, state schools constitute:

> *"a crucial sector of the agents of cultural and social reproduction and a crucial sector of the agents of symbolic control".*

The fact remains that teachers are workers (A Hargreaves, 1994a) and are, by nature, "paid agents of cultural diffusion" (Waller: 1965, p25). They remain answerable not only to their immediate superiors but also to those who have the power to control and determine significant conditions of their work (Calderhead, 1987). Hence, as schools become reconstructed in structural and ideological ways, the teacher's work cannot be expected to stay immune from such change. Accordingly, the manner in which teachers perceive their own work is affected. This highlights an important source of enquiry in our research study:

---

[48] The quote at the beginning of this chapter highlights such an appeal to teachers' professional identity. Though it claims to stress the worth attached to teachers' contribution, taken in an

"Little of a teacher's work in the classroom can be fully isolated from what happens in the school, and events in the wider educational scene have such a strong impact on the self-esteem and potential for self-realization [..] of individuals that they can change the way in which the latter perceive and define even 'work itself'" (Nias: 1989, p103).

This chapter delineates some important conceptual changes to teachers' work culture in schools. The term 'culture' is used here in the broadest sense to refer to changes in commonly held values, beliefs and attitudes, or in 'the way we do things around here' (Pheysey: 1993, A Hargreaves: 1994a). While any definition of the term is best seen in a particular direction rather than "mirroring a concrete reality" (Alvesson: 1993, p1), it generally reflects an organisation's or group of individuals' "system of knowledge, ideology, values, laws, and day-to-day rituals" (Morgan: 1986, p112). For the purposes of this study, then, this chapter provides a theoretical analysis of how macro changes have affected this conceptual notion of teachers' 'culture'. In so doing, it proffers an important theoretical foundation for examining teachers' perceptions of changes to their work. Thus, the theoretical analysis presented here may be judged against the 'lived experiences' (Apple, 1982b) of teachers, as outlined in Part Four of this study[49].

Transformations to teachers' work culture cannot be readily assessed, due in large part to the complexity and dynamics of the change process itself. *Change*, for example,

---

'authoritative' context it is more likely to mean that they have a *duty* to respond to the 'raising standards' agenda.

[49] It is important to note that the empirical data presented in Part Four illuminates fresh insight into changes in teachers' work culture. Hence, this chapter does not represent a *fully* comprehensive

represents a micropolitical activity in which "competing purposes and interests are at stake" (A Hargreaves: 1994a, p231). As recipients of change, the teacher population is composed of diverse interests which vary according to age, gender, race and class characteristics. One cannot, therefore, generalise about the change effects on teachers as a whole. In terms of identity, too, changes of role (e.g. from 'professional carer' to 'producer') are "likely to lead to a number of dilemmas and tensions, rather than a simple displacement of one role by another" (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p101). Further, the 'relative autonomy' of institutions and agents (mentioned earlier) means that any proposed transition of ideologies (between macro-micro and within) might be inherently contradictory (Apple and Weis, 1983). Indeed, as a direct consequence of change, schools and teachers may experience different ideological obligations that remain in tension. They may also produce contradictory responses in reply to any intended change objective:

> *"[Teachers'] work culture provides important grounds for worker resistance, collective action, informal control of pacing and skill, and reasserting one's humanity"* (Apple: 1982a, p25).

In addition to these points, there are contentions about the nature of organisational change within the school workplace itself, between: those who claim an on-going transition from a fordist to a post-fordist model of reorganisation (e.g. Brown and Lauder, 1997); those who reject such optimistic shifts (e.g. Avis, 1996) and; those who claim a complex and dynamic process of adjustment between both models (e.g. Simkins, 2000).

---

theoretical foundation for examining teachers' perceptions of change. A dialectical relationship between theory and results is therefore inferred in illuminating our research focus.

The above discussion points to the uneven and contradictory direction of change, as well as to the likely contestation of outcomes. These complex issues of change are recognised in this study as normal, not pathological (Fullan: 1991, A Hargreaves: 1994a). Further, it is acknowledged that much of what constitutes teachers' work culture (values, beliefs, routines etc.) is tacit, inaccessible and above all intricate. Thus, there can be no formulaic response to the question: *how is a teacher's work culture affected by current macro changes?* I wish to argue, however, that even though an extensive account of the cultural impact of change cannot be easily given, it does not mean that the possibilities for illumination are exhausted. This chapter, therefore, highlights significant aspects of teachers' work culture which have been profoundly affected (albeit to varying degrees) by the 'raising standards' agenda. The analysis presented here utilises an important underlying assumption, that is: given that teachers' work culture is relational to the structural and ideological conditions of schooling, any change in the latter is bound to affect the former. This underpinning rationale thus draws attention to three conceptual changes to teachers' work culture. They include:

- the *intensification* of labour
- the *proletarianization* of teaching
- the proliferation of *unreal* aspects of the job

An analysis of each of these transformations is intended to provide an agenda of theoretical possibilities for thinking about school reform and subsequent changes to teachers' work culture. Specifically, for the purposes of this study, the theoretical possibilities presented here are aimed at providing a conceptual foundation for thinking about how teachers might perceive the cultural impact of change.

Section One: Intensification

The concept of *intensification* is drawn from general theories of the labour process. It has been used extensively in educational literature to refer to the increased demands which are present in teaching and the erosion of workplace privileges (Apple: 1986, Densmore: 1987, A Hargreaves: 1992a, 1994a, Acker: 1999). In general terms, the concept of intensification is used to describe increased pressures to do more work with the same amount of resources formerly allocated, and is perceived to be most clearly manifest in the escalation of workload requirements. A number of claims are made within the intensification thesis. Seven are worthy of mention here in proffering explanations of changes to teachers' work. The first five are adapted from the works of Larson (1980) and A Hargreaves (1992a, 1994a); point six refers to the findings of Hargreaves' own research study on the use of preparation time among elementary school teachers (A Hargreaves, 1994a); and the final claim is made by A Hargreaves (1992a, 1994a) which refers specifically to the thesis of 'proletarianization' (defined later in section Two). Intensification claims include:

1) there is less time in the working day for relaxation - time itself is an 'intensive' concept
2) there is a lack of time to retool one's skills and keep abreast of one's field
3) intensification creates chronic and persistent overload which reduces personal discretion, inhibits involvement in and control over longer-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise
4) it leads to reductions in the *quality* of service, as corners are cut to save time

5) intensification leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can in turn create excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reductions in the quality of service
6) intensification creates and reinforces scarcities of preparation time
7) intensification is voluntarily supported by many teachers and misrecognized as professionalism [main source: A Hargreaves: 1994a, pp119,120]

Most of the above points highlight the close link between the intensification and proletarianization theses. It is my intention to present the analysis of the intensification thesis as separate from discussions on proletarianization. This is not to deny the close relationship between the two concepts, but instead it allows us to examine the individual significance of each process. Also, from a conceptual understanding perspective, it is considered beneficial to disjoin descriptions somewhat. This is because some educationalists unproblematically fuse one thesis with another and, in particular, present intensification as the primary and, sometimes, sole cause of proletarianization. The above list of intensification features, for example, may be shown to overstate the role of intensification in *determining* a state of proletarianization in teaching. Hence, while section Two examines the latter concept in detail, the remainder of this section specifically examines the features of intensification which pertain to contemporary concerns about the implementation of a 'raising standards' agenda. Two of these features (mentioned in the above list) point to the significance of time and workload factors, while other features (provided by this author) relate to issues of job expectations, accountability measures, pedagogy, and stress. All of these are now discussed.

As a description of the ubiquitous shifts in the nature and demands of teaching, it is claimed here that the intensification thesis remains as germane as ever. While there is clear evidence for the intensification of teachers' work as far back as 1990 (Pollard et al, 1994), I would argue that within the contemporary context this process has not relented - indeed, if anything it has intensified. Nowadays, a number of complex factors may be shown to coexist which significantly contribute to an intensification of teachers' work. Such factors include:

> *"...bigger classes, the addition of new managerial tasks at the school level, new technology such as fax machines [and computers] moving information in and out of the school, new information systems in the school which monitor student and map school performance, increased activity around business partnerships, more intense entrepreneurial activity, a constant cycle of assessments, to name but a few"* (S Robertson: 1996, p45).

Teaching is a hard job and practitioners themselves have often described their work as a 'daily challenge' (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1993). Such daily challenges are exacerbated by certain postmodern tensions which derive from the incapacity of schools to deal with a proliferation of new demands (as mentioned in chapter Three). A Hargreaves (1994a, p4) notes that such tensions present four problems for teachers:

1) the teacher's role expands to take on "new problems and mandates - though little of the old role is cast aside to make room for these changes"
2) innovations multiply, workload increases and timelines for implementation are contracted

3) the "collapse of moral certainties" leads to a questioning of old missions and purposes, though there are no obvious replacements
4) teaching as a process is regularly critiqued, "as scientific certainties lose their credibility"

The nature of teaching is such that teachers are faced with various tensions and contradictions. These largely derive from multiple (and often, incompatible) pressures to satisfy the public, exercise professional discretion and respond to both state and institutional direction (Densmore, 1987).

The pressures of teaching are intensified by the proliferation of new accountability measures. Pollard et al (1994, p83)[50], for example, found that there were marked differences between teachers' feelings prior to and post Education Reform Act (ERA) concerning their relationship with the headteacher, colleagues and parents. Following the 1988 ERA, it was shown that teachers felt far more strongly accountable to these groups[51]. As accountability to these various groups (including other outside agencies, such as Ofsted) increase, there endures a proliferation of measures which specify and organise performance indicators to satisfy audit demands. Besides an obvious increase in workload (which is discussed later), teachers are compelled to symbolically commit themselves to such accountability mechanisms. This presents itself as a significant dilemma for teachers. On the one hand, accountability may be desired and legitimated on moral or 'professional' grounds but, on the other, its propositions may be perceived

---

[50] Note: while the findings presented here relate exclusively to English primary schools, I found that, within my own study, these results are strongly replicated in an English secondary school context (see Part Four).

[51] Simkins (2000, p322) highlights the reinforcement of the pivotal position of heads as organisational leaders. This points to the proposition that teachers are becoming increasingly aware of their 'accountable relationship' with *headteachers*.

as an inherent lack of trust in the individual and the profession as a whole. This dilemma is partly derived from the conceptual meaning of 'accountability' itself:

> *"as the term accountability implies, people want to know how to trust one another, to make their trust visible, while (knowing that) the very desire to do so points to the absence of trust"* (Strathern: 2000, p310).

Such a dilemma also derives from the meaning attached to 'accountability' as it is located within the contemporary political and educational contexts. As chapter Three highlights, for example, most teachers will perceive that less trust is being ascribed to them and more to those who regulate the audit[52]. While teachers may support (in principle) the role of external audit, the 'technology of transparency' embedded within is widely considered as inadequate for understanding how organisations 'really' work (Strathern, 2000). Within this perspective, there thus appears a 'gap in thinking' between regulators' and teachers' notion of 'real' practice. Since the latter group are ultimately accountable to the former, teachers may thus be prone towards a 'fabrication' of practice (Ball: 1997a, p332). Section Three elaborates more on this issue.

A major concern of the intensification thesis is that there's less time dedicated to the 'core' activities of the organisation[53]. This compression of time and space in the workplace is attributable (in significant part) to the sheer intense pace of reform.

Indeed, one may exemplify the intensification of 'raising standards' reform at macro-

---

[52] Teachers' acknowledgement that there is less trust being placed in them as professionals has a profound effect on their morale. It seems ironic that this issue is not being currently addressed by a Labour government that professed deep concerns in the recent past: "The morale of the teaching profession has never been lower. Their negotiating rights have been removed, whilst public confidence in them has been consistently undermined by government spokesmen" (Labour Party: 1989, p2).

level as a form of 'policy hysteria' (Stronach and Morris: 1994). Here, complex proposals for change are discredited by the manner in which they are put into effect too quickly (Black, 1995). While intensity at the macro level is reflected in the institutionalisation of planning, the subsequent impact on teachers' work culture can be profound. This point is acknowledged by the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB):

> *"There is wide support for the drive to raise standards, but at the same time there is concern about the pace of change and the impact on the teachers' job of wider social changes"* (STRB: 1999, p11).

As 'raising standards' initiatives amass, there exists the increasing possibility that each new change will be seen by teachers as an 'add-on', and not part of their integrated practice. The subsequent impact of accumulative change on teachers' time is shown to be significant. Campbell and Neill (1994a) highlight the concepts of *extensiveness* and *intensity* as an explanation of how teachers' time is currently being exhausted in the job. *Intensity* here refers to a concentration of tasks which is reflected in the amount of 'simultaneous working and teaching' within a teacher's working day (Campbell and Neill: 1994a, p165). The *extensiveness* of teachers' time pertains to the increased number of hours worked during the week. Regarding the latter, Rafferty (1994) provides evidence of secondary heads working on average about 61.1 hours per week, while the figure for class teachers is 48.9 hours. Recently, the STRB (1999) has put the latter figure at a higher value of 50.8 hours. This prompted the circulation of the following anxiety:

---

[53] 'Core' activities may include, for example, matters relating to the fostering of learning or the focus on professional development practice.

> *".. action should be taken to ensure that the hours worked by all teachers are kept within reasonable bounds and that they have adequate rest periods and breaks"* (STRB: 1999, p33).

The issue of non-contact time (which is alluded to in the above quote) is an important consideration within the intensification thesis. A Hargreaves' (1994a) study of preparation time in US elementary schools, for example, found that such time was increasingly being 'colonised' by administrative jobs. It is a trend which resonates within the UK context across school sectors (e.g. Nias: 1989, Helsby: 1999). The government recognises that teachers are over-burdened by administrative duties and has pledged its commitment and financial support to easing bureaucratic workload (DfEE, 2000b). As yet, however, there is no sign of this 'burden' being abated, especially considering the continual influx of more 'raising standards' initiatives, such as appraisal and performance related pay (PRP) proposals. Further, the government tends to treat excessive bureaucracy more exclusively in terms of a 'managerial' problem, and less in terms of a 'professional' solution[54]. Recently, this has prompted the unions [joint action on behalf of the National Association of the Secondary Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT)] to threaten strike action on the grounds that the professional capacities of teachers have been undermined. Their argument is that teachers should be alleviated of unnecessary bureaucracy in order to concentrate on pedagogic matters in schools (The Times: June 23, 2000). Certainly, teachers appear in support of this position and they remain

---

[54] Policy-makers and administrators see and experience 'time' (see A Hargreaves: 1994a, pp107,108) and 'change' differently from teachers. The former group will tend to view bureaucratic workloads as necessary for the management of change, but perhaps in need of refinement. Teachers are likely to perceive bureaucracy as largely unnecessary and as a distraction from their concentration on 'core' tasks (see Part Four of this study).

acutely concerned about the manner in which their time is spent in the workplace (see chapter Seven).

A broader strategy of intensification has implications for the way in which pedagogy is effected in schools. According to Covington (1996, p24), intensification in this regard, means:

> *"simply continuing to do what has been done for years, but more of it - lengthening the school day, requiring more homework, and the like".*

The advent of certain 'raising standards' initiatives (such as home-school contracts, Easter/summer schools, homework clubs, GCSE revision classes, 'borderline' targets, proposals for a longer school year etc.) all serve to intensify learning in schools. Within such an 'authoritative' perspective, pupils must be provided with more and more information over an extended amount of instruction time. This is exemplified by the following quote from a prominent High Reliability Schools proponent:

> *"The logic of extended day and extended year programmes is straightforward: if students aren't learning enough, provide them with more, and perhaps more varied, instruction"* (Stringfield: 1995, p73)[55].

Teachers (as 'providers') are encouraged to work intensively through laden schemes of work and tight syllabuses. While they may broadly welcome such a structure as helpful (in terms of defining the direction of learning more clearly), they are likely to have serious reservations about its practical implementations. Teachers, for example, are only too aware that learning is a complex affair and one which cannot be solely

---

[55] Note the 'tough' 'authoritative' language used here which finds much sympathy with New Labour's value position (Fairclough, 2000).

achieved by intensifying the provision of 'facts' (see chapter Two). Further, they are likely to question their own practice of 'covering the ground' as an inadequate measure of 'effective' pedagogy, but one which nevertheless can be legitimated according to pragmatic values.

Connell (1985, p72) remarks that there is "no logical limit to the expansion of an individual teacher's work". Given the contemporaneous demands of a 'raising standards' agenda, this issue of an expansive workload remains a significant concern for teachers. Motivation problems, for example, are inextricably linked to workload pressures (STRB: 1999, p31). Teachers when faced with ever-increasing tasks are likely to consider the challenge of the working day (or week) as accomplishing the required number of objectives (Apple, 1986). While priority lists are made out, inevitably some tasks don't get done (at least not adequately). As a result, teachers regularly feel guilty at work (A Hargreaves, 1994a). Their desire to ease this guilt meets with frustration when they are forced to spend more time on bureaucratic assignments which detract from pedagogical matters (Hopkins, 1994). Pervasive work demands are also shown to have a negative effect on staff social relations and are seen to increasingly impinge upon individuals' personal and sociable lives (Helsby, 1999). Further, Ofsted inspections are frequently reported as overly anxious moments and as being excessively time-consuming (Ball: 1997a, Helsby: 1999). The significance of the intensification of teachers' workload, some proponents claim, is that the process itself is implicit and subject to gradual development - so much so that "the fact that it is occurring is often not apparent to the workers themselves" (Densmore: 1987, p147)[56]. It is also claimed that pressure to 'get through the work' is sometimes self-induced by teachers' sense of conscientiousness and professional obligation to a 'care ethic' in the

job (Campbell and Neill, 1994a). Other work pressures derive from the fact that teachers are faced with disparate job tasks which sometimes sit uneasily together[57]. Such pressures become more concentrated as 'time', which is "a resource as real as materials" (Denscombe: 1980, p285), becomes exhausted in attempts to carry out job functions.

A major consequence of the intensification thesis, and particularly of the increase in workload, is that teachers experience stress in their daily working lives. While in some cases stress may be considered positive, the overwhelming effect of this emotion is negative. McMahon (1999) illuminates some of the ill effects of stress on teachers' behaviour in schools, including: 'hurrying and worrying', less tolerance with pupils in and out of class, less time for people, loss of a sense of humour, and feelings of guilt which arise from the perceived loss of classroom creativity and the inability to 'keep up' with workload requirements (such as assessment, homework, marking etc.). As social relations with colleagues become adversely affected (due mainly to workload and time demands), teachers are deprived of an important source for alleviating stress (Nias, 1989). This is a worry, especially when one considers the high level of 'burnout' among teachers as a professional group[58]. Perhaps the most immediate stress felt by teachers and pupils in schools is caused by exam pressure and the perceived need to 'succeed'. From the pupils' perspective, Denscombe (2000, p359) argues that the stress experienced by young people in Years 10 and 11 can be linked to the conditions of late modernity. Here, exams are seen to constitute an important 'life-

---

[56] This point is further developed in section Two.
[57] This point relates to discussions on the *contradictory* nature of teaching (see chapter Two).
[58] 'Burnout', which may be described from a psychological perspective, describes a "sense of wearing out" and assumes that individuals are to blame for their failure to cope with stress (Dworkin: 1997, p459). Arguably, this description facilitates an 'authoritative' viewpoint which emphasises an 'effective' teacher as one who is capable of withstanding overbearing pressure in the workplace. A

chance' moment for young people and, consequently, are seen more for their personal and social significance than for their content per se. Teachers, who are ever mindful of these wider implications of exams are significantly shown to contribute to young people's stress by cajoling, reminding, pressurising and generally acting as 'stress amplifiers' (ibid., pp364,365). In turn, teachers themselves are prone to stress as a direct result of the perceived need to exercise such pressure in the interests of monitoring pupils' progress and performance (see Part Four).

The experience of stress has profound implications for job satisfaction (Varlaam et al, 1992), though the extent to which teachers cope with this emotion depends on matters relating to their different personalities, job priorities, and work pressures. While there is much evidence to suggest that high priority is given to the issue of job satisfaction in the business world (Apple and Jungck: 1992, Hextall and Mahony: 1998), this focus has been largely neglected within the public sector sphere[59]. Failure to address issues of workload, stress and job satisfaction inevitably leads to problems of recruitment and retention. These problems are pertinent to a teaching profession which is significantly characterised by an ageing cohort of teachers (Merson, 2000)[60]. In particular, the increase in teacher retirement and departure is largely attributable to augmenting levels of stress and workload:

> *"Official figures for the last year available, 1998, showed numbers leaving the profession for other jobs grew by 1,000 to 15,500, after several years'*

---

more sociological perspective would emphasise the structural and organisational causes of stress (Dworkin, 1997).

[59] This leads one to question whether an 'authoritative' agenda 'selectively' borrows corporate initiatives for school use.

[60] Merson (2000, p156) informs us that "of some 400,000 teachers in service in England and Wales the age distribution is such that the average is 41, with 61.8 per cent of the service aged 40 or over". Further, "nearly 20 per cent are aged 50 or more compared with only 17 per cent under 30".

decline".. "Two out of three of those leaving in 1998 were over 50" (TES: June 23, 2000a, p2).

The above discussions point to the fact that the intensification of teachers' work should not be understated when considering the profound impact of a 'raising standards' agenda. Particularly, the transformational capacity of intensification itself (as a process of cultural change) should be continually stressed. One specific consequence of the transformational capacity of intensification is now addressed - the proletarianization of teaching[61].

Section Two: Proletarianization

The concept of proletarianization is rooted in Marxist tradition and is perceived to derive from Braverman's (1974) work *Labor and Monopoly Capital*[62]. Here, Braverman highlights Tayloristic principles (and specifically, the separation of conception from the execution of tasks) as the predominant strategy used in management's control over workers. This strategic use of scientific management principles locates the worker in a progressively alienated light (Braverman: 1974, p58). Specifically, worker alienation is shown to be manifest in the increased division of

---

[61] It is reiterated here that the proletarianization of teaching cannot be causally reduced to labour intensification factors alone. As a point of clarification, the intensification process is shown in this study to *significantly* impact upon (though, not fully account for) the existence of teacher 'de-skilling'. This point (which is sometimes overlooked by educationalists) is referred to again in the forthcoming section.

[62] The term 'proletarianization', and its associative concepts of 'deskilling' and 'reskilling', are not specifically mentioned by Braverman in his work. These terms have been constructed from Braverman's ideas and appropriated into contemporary educational discourse.

labour[63] which is imposed by augmented planning and control mechanisms in the workplace. Here, individual workers' tasks are narrowly controlled and simplified. Further, their skill is diminished in an absolute sense, "in that they lose craft and traditional abilities without gaining new abilities adequate to compensate the loss" (ibid., p425). While considerable caution should be exercised in translating any ideas about proletarianization from Braverman's text[64], I believe there are important insights here into workplace control which may illuminate a broader understanding of the contemporary influences on teachers' work culture. The following discussions, therefore, attempt to develop the ideas of Braverman within an educational context[65].

Within educational discourse the concept of proletarianization (Ozga and Lawn: 1981, 1988, Apple and Weis: 1983, Apple: 1986, Densmore: 1987, Ozga: 1987) is specifically used to refer to: the increased division of labour; the separation of conception from the execution of tasks; the proliferation of workload demands; and the reduction of teachers' autonomy and use of skills in the workplace. It is claimed that the resultant combination of these factors serves to 'deskill' teachers' work. According to Ozga and Lawn (1988, p324) such deskilling:

> *".. results in the erosion of workplace autonomy, the breakdown of relations between workers and employers, the decline of craft skills, and the increase of management's controls".*

---

[63] Braverman (1974, p70) sees the 'division of labour' as separate from the function of just dividing up tasks. The concept (defined as a form of capitalist strategy) explicitly relates to limited productive operations which are laden with social class assumptions about 'who' should perform those tasks.
[64]It should be emphasised here that Braverman's work is set within a specific historical period and that it concentrates almost exclusively on US production industries (not educational institutions). Morcover, it is deeply rooted in a Marxist/structuralist ideology. These points are not to highlight a criticism of Braverman's work but to act as a caution against a seamless translation/adaptation of ideas to the educational sphere.
[65] The origins of proletarianization lie in Braverman's treatment of class conflict. My study does not specifically deal with the issue of class interest (though it points out its significance) in examining

While this concept of deskilling emanates from Marx's view of the alienation of the worker (based on relations of capital production), the basic idea holds that "the alienated character of the work is manifest in the notion that the work does not belong to the worker himself [sic] but to others" (du Gay: 1996, p11). Thus, proponents of the proletarianization thesis propose that teachers lose 'ownership' of their profession, as they effectively "implement the ideas of others, instead of innovating for themselves" (Campbell and Neill: 1994a, p213). This loss of autonomy, it is claimed, has profound implications for teachers' experiences of work.

The present managerialist faith in leadership, which is symbolised by the phrase 'let the managers manage', can be contrasted with an emphasis on control which is a dominant feature of contractualism (typified by the phrase 'make the managers manage'). S Robertson (1999, p123) referring to the work of Schick (1996) notes that this tension between managerialism and contractualism means that the managerialist promotion of organisational change is met with the contractualist "desire to limit the scope for the exercise of professional judgement and discretion amongst professional workers". It is claimed that the overriding emphasis on control mechanisms, which derives from the current restructuring initiatives, fails to create the right conditions for teachers to work autonomously and collaboratively as professionals (Pollard et al: 1994, S Robertson: 1996, Menter at al: 1997, Helsby: 1999). This is despite the rhetorical claims of a 'raising standards' agenda which contend that changes have enhanced teachers' professionalism and have provided greater opportunity for collaboration in the workplace (DfEE: 1998a, 2000b). In particular, moves towards firm controls over

---

teachers' perceptions of change. While this would be an important enquiry in itself, such an analysis lies beyond the scope and depth of this work.

curriculum instruction (Apple: 1982a, 1982b), Staff Development (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992), and School Development Plans (Ball: 1997a, Helsby: 1999), highlight the loss of teachers' autonomy in the professional determination of their work. Further, under curriculum restructuring arrangements, it is claimed that teaching has become characterised by a loss in professional creativity (Densmore: 1987, Ball: 1994a).

Teachers' loss of autonomy and creativity can, in significant part, be explained by the promotion of an 'authoritative' model of the 'effective' teacher (as outlined in chapter Three). This point draws attention to the fact that proletarianization as a concept should be understood within a particular political, educational and historical context, and not just in relation to labour intensification factors[66]. In this way, what it means to be 'de-professionalised' can only be understood in relation to current hegemonic accounts of what it means to be 'professional'. New Labour's commissioning of Hay McBer's (2000) report, for example, signifies an 'authoritative' drive to provide clear targets for the 'effective professional'. The report in question sets out sixteen professional characteristics of effective teachers and seven effective techniques they use in the classroom[67]. This report has been positively welcomed by some leading spokespersons in the field. Perhaps most notably, David Hart (general secretary for the National Association of Head Teachers - NAHT) approves of its contents calling it "a blueprint for the future of the profession" (TES: June 23, 2000a). Indeed, other union officials can't fault the report on the grounds of content, although they do point

---

[66] This point is sometimes missed by proponents who assume that the proletarianization of teaching is solely a direct consequence of the intensification thesis.

[67] To illustrate the type of 'effective' characteristics highlighted in this report, the following list includes the seven techniques which are listed as guidelines for 'effective' practice in the classroom. These include: have high expectations, plan lessons well, use a variety of techniques to engage pupils, have a clear strategy for pupil management, use time and resources wisely, use a range of assessment methods, and set regular homework (see Hay McBer, 2000).

to its expensive cost, the alienation of traditional educational partners from the consultation process, and the fact that the commonsense 'results' presented are already well known amongst teachers (TES: May 12, 2000). Others again, emphasise that while the report is useful, caution should be exercised in recognising any attempts to use it as a recipe for action. In particular, it is felt that "teacher effectiveness has to be tested in real life rather than under laboratory conditions" (TES: June 23, 2000b).

Taking up this last point, it seems clear that while Hay McBer's report on the effective characteristics of teachers is useful in terms of *content*, concerns still remain about its potential 'authoritative' *use*. Particularly, it is widely noted that professional expertise cannot depend on the general application of theoretical knowledge to individual practice (e.g. Schön: 1983, 1991). This is, in large part, due to the fact that teaching is characterised by routines (Brown and McIntyre, 1993) that are learned 'in' the job, and are dependent on 'a personally held system of beliefs, values and principles" (Clarke and Peterson: 1986, p287). It is also recognised that teachers must make multiple decisions within a working day, the majority of which are informed by experience and values, not by the adoption of well tested rules (Jackson: 1968, Lortie: 1975). Often, such decisions are made simultaneously in line with aggregated outcomes:

> *"Breadth of purpose means that teaching performances will be judged in terms of moral, aesthetic, and scientific values all at once"* (Lortie: 1975, p150).

Within 'authoritative' proposals for applying a prescribed set of 'effective' rules to particular cases, the practitioner's perceptions of events are precluded from consideration (Hamilton, 1994). In essence, this means that the individuality of teachers is overlooked. This problem is recognised in Hay McBer's report inasmuch as it exhibits an awareness of the danger of 'cloning' professionals (TES: June 16, 2000). Such attention to caution, however, may hold no sway at government policy level, particularly since the concept of 'effectiveness' is intrinsically 'theory-bound' (Doyle, 1986). Thus, within an 'authoritative' perspective, there is a tendency to reciprocate the messy and subjective representation of teaching with a coherent image that promotes conformity to standardised concepts of the 'effective' professional. Such a clear coherent image of teaching, however, belies current levels of understanding about teaching practice (Woods et al, 1997). For a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching craft, it is apparent that we need less 'blueprints' and more thorough investigations into "its practices, struggles, lived experience and contradiction" (Ozga and Lawn: 1988, p327).

An important claim of the proletarianization thesis is that a reduction in worker autonomy is sometimes not recognised by teachers themselves. This is largely due to the fact that transformations to their work culture are often couched in subtle (almost hidden) forms of control. Apple (1982a, p141) refers to such controls as being 'technical' in orientation because they are "embedded in the physical structure" of the job. The use of pre-packaged sets of curricular materials are proffered as the best example of this imposition of technical control (ibid., p143). Here, Apple describes how teachers are being 'deskilled' when they are forced to execute curricular plans

which are externally conceptualised[68]. Further, the 'reskilling' of teachers occurs via subsequent in-service schemes, the realignment of funding patterns in response to new training 'needs' and, not least, through the focus of the curricular materials themselves (ibid., p146). Often, as Apple (1986) argues, these 'deskilling' and 'reskilling' processes are so subtle that they are misrecognised by teachers as a symbol of their increased professionalism (Apple, 1986). Thus, the "increasing technicization and intensification of the teaching act" (ibid., p45) is accompanied by a feeling of increased responsibility which, paradoxically, derives from the proliferation of workload and decision-making duties. While teachers view these new aspects of the job as an extension of their professional status, they remain unaware of the 'hidden' controls which are congenital to such change:

> *"A fundamental problem facing us is the way in which systems of domination and exploitation persist and reproduce themselves without being consciously recognised by the people involved"* (Apple: 1982a, p13).

As their work becomes more intensified and controlled, teachers, in the words of Apple and Weis (1983, p152), "become unattached individuals, divorced from both their colleagues and the actual stuff of their work". Subsequent feelings of isolation, whilst always a condition of teaching[69], are exacerbated by 'authoritative' views on professionalism which emphasise a culture of individualism. This culture stresses individual responsibility, the importance of career advancement, and the ascendancy of management-teacher relations over peer group support (as outlined in chapter Three). Moreover, such an individualistic culture promotes the 'effective' teacher as one who

---

[68] Elsewhere, Apple uses the analogy of a 'curriculum on a cart' to describe how curricular plans are *externally* produced (Apple and Jungck: 1992, p30).

can individually withstand modern-day pressures in the job. As teachers become more removed from colleagues, however, their opportunity for collegial work is diminished. Ball (1997a) delineates the effects of teacher isolation in terms of the 'de-socialisation' of staff relationships. In his study of one English secondary school, he highlights how this process of de-socialisation is exhibited:

> *"The staff room was hardly used, especially at lunch-times, and most staff social activities had ceased. Staff relations were changed and narrowed, with an emphasis on business-like and procedural changes"* (Ball: 1997a, p325).

This de-socialisation process has important implications for the successful implementation of a 'raising standards' agenda. The decline of action research as a mode of school improvement, for example, may be directly affected by this process as individual teachers struggle to find time to reflect about the job and relate their problems to others. Also, the de-socialisation of staff relations points to the feasibility that 'teacher-to-teacher talk' (Cortazzi, 1991) may be becoming under-utilised and under-valued in schools. Moreover, one must consider that, since the quality of teaching and learning *in* the classroom is shaped by the quality of relationships teachers have with their colleagues *outside* the classroom (Rosenholtz, 1989), a 'de-socialisation' process is bound to moderate the potential accomplishments of any 'raising standards' policy.

The proletarianization thesis is a valuable source of investigation in this research study. In examining teachers' perceptions of change, it is important to explore whether practitioners themselves feel deskilled or de-professionalised in any way. While the

---

[69] Densmore (1987), for example, talks about the physical separation of classrooms as an omnipresent example of 'teacher isolation'.

descriptions presented here on proletarianization focus on important structural explanations, there is a sense that they fail to adequately deal with a subjective dimension to analysis. The following discussions address this issue by problematising two inherent assumptions of proletarianization. The first assumption which may be placed under scrutiny is the accepted notion that teachers unwittingly view increased controls over their work as an enhancement of their professional status. The argument follows that teachers become professionally 'defensive' in their response to what are essentially alienating work practices (Densmore, 1987)[70]. In essence, it is claimed, they inadvertedly provide added legitimation to the proletarianization thesis. This idea of legitimation is neatly captured by Langford (1978, p66):

> *"What brings a legal rule into existence [..] is not so much its expression but its acceptance by those to whom it applies".*

While this explanation may prove to be valid, I do not believe it is absolute. As Connell (1985, p69) reminds us, "teachers are workers, teaching is work, and the school is a workplace". It is important to teachers, from a professional perspective, to be seen to carry out what's required of them. Regardless of whether teachers may discern the causes of 'deskilling', or whether their professional judgement stands in opposition to change, they are ultimately responsible for effecting transformations to their own practice. This poses the question: *how much can we blame teachers for 'co-operating' with the alienating practice of proletarianization, given that they are responding to the professional demands of the day?*

---

[70] Professional status is very important to teachers because throughout history they have fought for its recognition alongside other middle class occupations (Grace, 1991). The proletarianization argument follows that, as a result of change to their work, teachers are therefore reluctant to claim that they have become de-professionalised.

Another assumption which may be questioned is the view that the individual teacher is ultimately subordinated and disempowered by the proletarianization process. While this assumption may be seen to be valid, again I feel that it only proffers a partial description of events. For a more comprehensive explanation we need to look once more at a subjective dimension to analysis. Some proponents of the proletarianization thesis do recognise (albeit in a limited and understated sense) the individual agency of teachers. Apple (1982a), for example, notes that teachers have the capacity for 'informal cultural resistances'. However, such resistances are, paradoxically, shown to reinforce teachers' subordination at the same time:

> *"Yes, [teachers] can partly control the skill level and pacing of their work, but they do not really impinge on the minimal requirements of production; nor do they effectively challenge the 'rights' of management. Resistances on one level may partially reproduce the lack of control on another"* (Apple: 1982a, pp25,26).

I do not wish to dispute the above claim, instead I would like to point out that the explanation given (that teachers are effectively 'controlled') is limited in scope. While much of teachers' work (culture, work processes and conditions) lies beyond the control of individuals, it is never fully determined. In relation to curriculum instruction (including pre-packaged curricular materials), for example, Acker (1999, pviii) notes:

> *"Teachers don't merely deliver the curriculum. They develop, define and reinterpret it too. It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get".*

Teachers feel that their professional responsibility extends beyond the delivery of prescribed material and the restriction of meeting academic objectives (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1993). Hence, professional responsibility moves beyond the concern about *what to teach*, to include *ways of teaching* (ibid: p78, Helsby: 1999). While teachers are undoubtedly subject to greater controls over the *content* of curriculum instruction, they are thus likely to retain some power over its *use*. From a pragmatic perspective alone, for example, teachers are able to adjudge the appropriateness of curriculum content as applied in the classroom[71]. This highlights the fact that, even if curriculum content is considered to be constraining, teachers can derive benefits from its use. In this way, the content becomes rationalised:

> *"a specific influence which is felt to be important is not necessarily felt to be constraining if its existence is felt to be justified.. [..] thus, there is no straightforward relationship between the strength of a given influence or constraint and the* ***degree of control*** *which that influence exerts"* (Broadfoot and Osborn: 1993, p96 - their emphases).

Teachers' sense of autonomy, therefore, is visible in their capacity to *mediate* action. Pollard et al's (1994) work, for example, highlights the manner in which they:

> *"..judged the extent and form in which new subject content, specified in the National Curriculum, was to be introduced; they mediated the use of standardized assessment procedures to avoid pupil anxiety; they interpreted the new roles which they were allocated, for instance as curriculum*

---

[71] Though he understates the influence of curriculum content on teachers' thinking and practice (concentrating instead on curriculum 'form'), Apple (1982b) admits that an analysis of content would be useful as a means of highlighting how meaning is produced. In particular, he briefly notes that teachers have some sense of agency over the use of content: "The choice is made, in part, by the teachers themselves. It is hard to argue in the face of that" (ibid., p266).

coordinators, and they sought to protect the quality of their relationship with pupils" (Quote from Menter et al: 1997, p85).

Campbell and Neill (1994a, p214), too, adopt a more cautious approach to proletarianization, noting that the thesis seems implausible when based on "broadly based observations of reality". They observe that teachers, in developing the National Curriculum, acquire new skills in assessment and the delivery of content. Elsewhere, they point to the proposition that some teachers will feel 'upskilled' by the new changes to their work (Campbell and Neill: 1994b). Others are shown to actively embrace the new changes because of gains in status and role position in the workplace (S Robertson, 1996). The counter assumption implicit here, then, is that teachers can *consciously* take control over their own work. While I recognise the relevance of this assertion, I do not wish to abandon the essence of the proletarianization claim - that teachers' ability for self-control is diminished. It is probable that the proletarianization thesis will have a greater bearing in some individual cases than others. Thus, it is likely that: while there will be some teachers who may *assimilate* change as a positive development; there will be others who may be forced to *resolve* new tensions and dilemmas; while others still may have to *resist* change on the basis that their existing practice has become constrained. Part Four of this study empirically develops this supposition, and prompts a response to the question: *to what extent do teachers feel they can control their own work?*

The general discussions presented on proletarianization thus far point to a number of theoretical possibilities in helping us understand how teachers might perceive a 'de-professionalisation' process. The above discussions highlight that this thesis is not a straightforward process. It is recognised that the control of teachers' work seldom

generates intended results, and often produces unintended consequences. The extent to which teachers engage with new change, for example, is strongly dependent upon the location of their personal and professional values in correspondence with those of the state. New Labour, for example, might wish to emphasise a process of '*re*-professionalisation' over that of '*de*-professionalisation', where the stress is on 'modernising' and positively reshaping teacher professionalism. However, to teachers, this may represent a competing value position. This is symptomatic of the nature of the teacher-state relationship, as it is:

> *"..marked by struggle, defeats and defiances, with the ideology of professionalism used by teachers and the state to advance their respective positions during particular periods"* (S Robertson: 1997, p637).

The course of this 'struggle' takes an uneven development within and between schools (Simkins, 2000). Particularly, the extent to which teachers adapt change to their existing practice is significantly influenced by the professional and work cultures within which they operate (Helsby, 1999). Further, their reactions to a 'de-skilling' process are largely dependent on matters relating to individual characteristics, including level of experience (Calderhead, 1987), gender-based location (Ozga and Lawn: 1988, Menter et al: 1997) and social class identity (S Robertson, 2000).

Section Three: The unreality of teaching

Teachers' work is increasingly characterised by, what I call, the proliferation of 'unreal' aspects of the job. This phenomenon derives, in large part, from the nature of the 'raising standards' agenda itself. As outlined in chapter Two, the 'raising

standards' agenda is couched in 'progressive' values which promote an unquestioning acceptance of a new 'modern' world. 'Lifelong learning', for example, is frequently used as a mantra for legitimating 'raising standards' policies in a global competitive market (DfEE, 1998b). The assumptions embedded within 'lifelong learning' proposals, however, remain highly disputable. Here, serious reservations endure concerning the claims that: 'lifetime jobs' are no longer sustainable; the causal link between education and economic performance is well established; skill shortages are widespread and; the economy is capable of absorbing a highly skilled workforce (see Robinson: 1996, pp5,6). Such uncertainty exposes a 'lifelong learning' policy as being enmeshed within an ideal paradigm. The stress, too, on exam *excellence for all* pupils (DfEE, 1997a), regardless of variances in individuals' academic ability, socio-economic status, and stage of learning development, exemplifies the utopian nature of a 'raising standards' agenda. Both examples point to, what Senge (1990, p142) calls, the juxtaposition of *vision* ('what we want') and *reality* ('where we are relative to what we want').

This gap between vision and reality solicits an enquiry into how much the 'raising standards' agenda is characterised by *myth* and/or *substance*. Engaging with the concept of 'myth', Hughes and Tight (1995, p290) argue that the appeal of the term, while largely emotional, is also "cast in at least a semblance of a rational form". Thus,

> *"[myths] can be held up as self-evident realities and slogans for the rest of society to follow. Once a way of feeling or a mode of action has been embodied in the mythology of a large group of people it acquires an incalculable power"* (ibid., p290).

Myths, it is argued, do not necessarily deny the truth or validity of a claim. Instead, they appeal to populist and commonsense reasoning, raise themselves above everyday considerations, and obscure the negative implications of their assertions. In opposition to this use of the term, Strain and Field (1997) claim that 'myth' is conflated with ideology. This is because:

> *"Much public rhetoric depends for its persuasiveness on exploitation of self-evident 'realities' masquerading as truths"* (Strain and Field: 1997, p143).

Here, the myth concept can be better explained as 'an ideological distortion of the truth'. This point is substantiated by du Gay (1996, p67) who regards ideology as a 'simulacrum' which "disguises, travesties and blurs reality and 'real' relations". He adds that it may be unhelpful to treat ideology as a 'con-trick', given that it sets out to constitute a certain 'reality' (or 'realities') for some individuals.

Though both arguments appear to be disparate, they share the common belief that certain forms of 'truth' are popularised despite their disconnection with 'reality'. Hence, regardless of whether one considers 'lifelong learning' or 'excellence for all' to be myths or ideological distortions, the *substance* of these proposals remains in question. It is contended here that, while this remains evident, teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda will be duly affected. Specifically, it is claimed that their work culture will be influenced by their subjective views on the validity of this agenda. The implicit assumption here is that teachers have the capacity to adjudge (at least to a significant degree) whether certain aspects of the 'raising standards' agenda appear to be more illusory than assured. Hence, teachers are understood to perceive (though not, necessarily, fully articulate) the emergence of a new 'unreality' to their work. The following discussions develop this claim.

Within the current climate 'raising standards' is taken to mean 'raising *academic* standards'. This appears to be the overriding concern in schools. While teachers value this objective as an important integral part of their work culture (Waller: 1965, Rosario: 1986), they are likely to accommodate this focus concordant to other job purposes. Thus, they are likely to assess their practice in terms of multiple product variables:

> *"The most important educational outcomes would appear to be increased knowledge and skills; increased interest in the subject or topic; increased intellectual motivation; increased academic self-confidence and self-esteem; increased development of pupil autonomy; and increased social development"* (Kyriacou: 1986, p13).

Although teachers' practice is characterised by a whole range of educational outcomes, to teachers the ascendancy attached to exam results seems apparent. In particular, the proliferation of assessment, recording and monitoring procedures in schools means that teachers are increasingly compelled to justify their actions and results to others at work. Subsequent pressure to achieve high levels of results, over time, and across different pupil cohorts, exacerbates the difficulties of the job. Ultimately, this ideal goal of 'exam success for all' is likely to be viewed upon by teachers (particularly those in disadvantaged schools) as simply not feasible.

The act of teaching is characterised by contradiction. Teachers must make constant professional decisions which are not set in a ritual format. In relation to the 'raising standards' agenda, they receive many mixed messages. On the one hand, for example,

they are asked to develop pupil independence in the learning process. At the same time, they are required to get students 'through the exams' and focus their learning according to rigid guidelines laid down by syllabuses and schemes of work. Similarly, teachers must continually demand the best from their students, advising that they spend considerable amounts of time per subject at every opportunity. At the same time, teachers are required to look out for their welfare, to ensure that they can cope with what's demanded of them. Further, teachers are required to pay special attention to 'borderline' students but simultaneously must ensure that 'all students succeed'. These mixed messages reinforce the complexity of teaching and highlight the professional dilemmas which teachers encounter with the 'raising standards' agenda.. It is ironic to consider that while the process of 'proletarianization' appears to delimit the professional capacity of teachers, the demands of the 'raising standards' agenda are such that they require teachers to make more professional decisions. Since these decisions cannot be reliant on systems-based recipes (as outlined in the last section), they constitute individualised responses to enforced dilemmas. The paradox of proletarianization, therefore, lies with the need for teachers to orchestrate their experiences and competencies to draw on *more* professional skills within the job.

The above discussion points to teachers' use of *ad hoc* procedures which "necessitate 'deviation' from [..] official prescriptions for activity" (Denscombe: 1980, p288). In recognising the multiple dilemmas they face, teachers act as *realists* inasmuch as they actively separate 'ideal' objectives (or 'truths') from the 'real-world' imperatives of the classroom (ibid., p286). Thus, by adopting "an irreal attitude to truth" (Rose: 1999, p59), teachers actively mediate change (at least to a significant degree). For example, in response to the call to raise standards for *all* pupils, teachers are likely to stress the

importance of high expectations *alongside* realistic outcome goals. In this way, they assess whether certain aspects of the 'raising standards' agenda compound adequately with their 'personal self' and with the context within which they work (A Hargreaves, 1994a). Hence, to a considerable extent, teachers individualise and filter demands in accordance with their own personal/professional value position. In this way, the manner in which they mediate change is largely based on sensible/meaningful judgements about 'what works':

> *"In our view, whether innovations will be seen as practical will depend on how they relate to the things which teachers have learned (through experience) about what is and what is not appropriate in their classrooms, and on the implicit skills and strategies which they have learned for achieving their purposes within the conditions in which they work"* (Brown and McIntyre: 1993, p15).

'Raising standards' strikes at the heart of teacher professionalism because its central message is that the quality of teaching must improve (DfEE: 1997a, 1998a). This message is presented in a rhetorically invincible form. As Hextall and Mahony (1998, p138) note:

> *"It would be a malicious or irresponsibly naive commentator who did not want schools or teacher education to be more effective, or standards of teaching, learning and behaviour to rise".*

While teachers are thus likely to support the 'raising standards' message in principle, the 'professional ideal' presented may come into conflict with the day-to-day reality of the job (Densmore: 1987, p149). Specifically, the model of professionalism supported

by the state may be shown to conflict with teachers' own professional value-systems. Thus, a managerialist model of professionalism which is promoted by the state (see chapter Three) may be contrasted with a bureau-professional model which is (arguably) supported by a majority of teachers. A clear distinction between both models, on the grounds of values, ideals and discourse, highlights how a large number of teachers might find change to be both constraining and difficult. Simkins (2000, p321) highlights the different characteristics of both models and, in so doing, implicitly points to this perception:

- "Bureau-professionalism is characterised by a series of cross-cutting *attachments* to client-centred, professional and public service values, such as equity and care, whereas managerialism is characterised by commitment to over-riding values and mission of the specific organisation"
- "Bureau-professionalism is characterised by *decision-making* through a combination of bureaucratic rules and professional discretion and judgement, whereas managerial decision-making is characterised by discretion entrusted to those who hold clearly identified managerial roles and authority and who use specialist management techniques to help them make choices"
- "Bureau-professional *agendas* are based on the needs of individual clients and client groups as interpreted or formulated by professionals. Those of managerialism, in contrast, derive from concerns focusing around organisational objectives and outcomes and the deployment of resources as defined by managers in response to their interpretations of the environmental forces with which the organisation is faced"

- "The *norms* of bureau-professionalism are defined in terms of the well-being, needs and rights of clients while those of managerialism are based on concepts of efficiency, organisational performance and customer-orientation"

Thus, the pervasive differences between both models (as highlighted above) point to the significant difficulties which a large number of teachers face in negotiating a transition from one mode of thinking and operation to another. For those teachers (particularly, experienced practitioners), 'coping strategies' (Lortie, 1975) are likely to be adopted to help them conform to 'new' managerialist ideals[72]. Insofar as this conformity to change appears more obligatory than planned, and inasmuch as the personal and professional commitment of individuals to the change process is somewhat occluded, it must be accepted that a certain amount of 'unreality' will become enmeshed within teachers' existing practice. In effect, it is probable that teachers will feel compelled to engage with new practices which remain distant from their beliefs. This is not to deny the notion that teachers engage in a 'persistent self-referentialism' (Nias, 1989) which allows them to hold onto their own professional values in correspondence with new work demands. Rather, the point to be made is that teachers are constantly faced with *creative tensions* (Woods et al, 1997) in their individualised responses to change, in which they are compelled to assimilate (or be seen to assimilate) certain work demands which are at odds with their own personal/professional principles. These new demands take on a semblance of 'unreality' because they are effectively considered by teachers to be either ambiguous, impractical, or insidious. The contrast between teachers' *public* and *private* responses

to change, for example, may illuminate their attempts to resolve such 'creative tensions'. On the one hand, teachers may publicly accept the focus on accountability measures, exam results, and performance indicators, but may privately retain a commitment to continue with their old ways of thinking and operating within the job. This has led some commentators to refer to teaching as an increasingly 'schizophrenic existence' (Muschamp et al, 1995). Also, in relation to teachers' explanations of the purposes of changes, Menter et al (1997, p101) refer to established studies which substantiate this opposite relationship between public and private views. In particular, they note that, publicly, teachers feel obliged to support the management's view of changes but, in private (and often cynically), they understand the 'reality' of the motives behind the management's actions.

The pressures which teachers feel under to support management's views and their vision for the school are considerable. This, in significant part, is confirmed by 'progressive' values which demand teachers' full commitment to change (see chapter Two). In many ways also, this emphasis on *solidarity* derives from established school effectiveness research which upholds such values as 'unity of purpose' and 'consistency of practice' (Sammons et al: 1995, p8). In Rutter et al's (1979) study, for example, it is emphasised that a school's atmosphere is greatly affected by the degree to which it functions as a 'coherent whole'. While it should be stressed that the worth attached to *solidarity* in school effectiveness research is grounded in collegial forms of organisation, these same values of 'coherence', 'unity' and 'consistency' have been unproblematically translated into managerialist discourse. Such values are manifest, for example, in the proliferation of school mission and ethos statements, development

---

[72] It is accepted that some teachers will be more 'comfortable' with the transition, and may openly adopt the 'new' managerialist ideals with a view to advancing their own professional status (S

plans, and various promotion paraphernalia which present a corporate image to the public. Since much of a school's corporate image is managerially constructed via the regulation of conduct and the assignment of rules, the values described here represent a 'mechanical' form of solidarity (Bernstein, 1975). Under this form, there is little tension (at least in appearance) between "private beliefs and role obligations" (ibid., p68). What is excluded from sight, however, is an increasing "division of values and purposes" between the 'corporatist' views of senior managers and the 'individualist' perspectives of teachers who are concerned with the specific needs of their pupils (Bowe and Ball: 1992, p58). Moreover, a certain prejudice against the expression of negative feeling is subsumed within this corporatist image, as schools are increasingly compelled to 'positively' project themselves for the competitive market.

This importance attached to *image* means that schools must increasingly be seen to be well managed and efficient 'producers' in the market place. Very often, as Clarke and Newman (1997, p89) point out:

> *"this leads to the institutionalisation of features of the business world as legitimating practices: for example, the production of strategic plans; the restructuring of organisations into business units; the development of marketing and business development functions; or the attainment of Investor in People status".*

A significant part of the problem with the proliferation of these 'legitimating practices' in schools is that, far from the intention of making schools more visible and accountable, they "paradoxically encourage opacity and the manipulation of representations" (Ball: 1997a, p319). Accordingly, as mentioned in section One, what

---

Robertson, 2000).

is concealed is "the 'real' facts about how the organisation works" (Strathern: 2000, p314). Thus, while glossy brochures project the school's image in line with 'best practice', teachers may actually see the *substance* therein as dislocated from 'reality'. This points to the observation that an effective school not only stems from its public image or from specific organisational structures:

> *"but is dependent on the spirit and understanding that pervades the life and work of a school, faithfully reflecting its basic objectives"* (DES: 1977, p7).

While 'legitimating practices' (such as school plans, brochures, and text production) continue to be prominent, they increasingly become 'reified' and 'self-referential' within schools (Ball, 1997a). In this way, they occupy the power to change ways of construing, documenting and acting upon the internal organisation of the school, to the point where they may "actually transform the meaning and reality of work" (Rose: 1989, p60). Thus, the fabrication process (Ball, 1997a) itself constitutes (at least to a notable degree) the actual work of teachers. One of the most visible evidence of this phenomenon is the augmenting pressure on teachers to exhibit, what I call, a certain amount of *image management*. By this, teachers increasingly show concern for how they are perceived at work, and act more in accordance with the imagined judgement of others. In line with pressures to conform to professional ideals (see chapter Eight), for example, teachers are increasingly held to account for their own 'effectiveness' by the perceived need to evidence acceptable levels of pupils' exam 'success'. This can often lead to "ritualized processes of verification" (Power: 1997, p14) as teachers are increasingly obliged to make their work visible. In this regard, inspections are highly influential in bringing about a state of 'fabrication' in teachers' practice (Ball, 1997a).

S Robertson (1999) highlights how the Education Review Office (ERO), New Zealand's version of Ofsted, is instrumental in producing such an effect:

> *"'Records', for example, are produced which do not necessarily resemble real practices, while teachers' displays of their teaching appear as ritualised performances. In a state of considerable anxiety, teachers 'tidy' up students to meet with the approval of ERO, or self-consciously engage in a performance that meets with its approval"* (S Robertson: 1999, p130).

The above 'fabrication' characteristics often resonate in teachers' dealings with senior management. Here, conversations and activities are commonly undertaken in an atmosphere of *immediacy*, where the purpose is usually to administer the latest initiative or examine potential improvements in exam results (see Part Four of this study). These dealings contribute to the regulation of teachers' behaviour as the perceived priorities of management are implicitly (and often explicitly) made known. The way teachers feel they have to act may in turn promote certain professional characteristics which are deemed necessary for this role. Thus, in line with a strong 'teacher effects' agenda (see chapter Two), teachers may deem it necessary to be seen to be good organisers of their work, to engage with statistical measures of exam performances, and to focus their attention on 'borderline' pupils. Likewise, the 'efficient' teacher may be seen as the individual who comfortably deals with stress, completes the syllabus early, and sticks rigidly to schemes of work. The 'committed' teacher may be deemed to be one who proffers his/her non-contact time freely to attend extra meetings or run school clubs or revision classes. Further, in an increasingly individualist culture, teachers may rule it necessary to assimilate all these

characteristics for the purpose of advancing their own managerial careers. Clarke and Newman (1997, p74) highlight this point well:

> *"To compete in the managerial career stakes now means demonstrating commitment through long (often excessive) hours of work and being able to cope with high stress. Staying on to be present at the crucial meeting to deal with the latest crisis has to take precedence over familial, relationship or community commitments. Whether the meeting is effective or not is sometimes less significant than being seen to have the commitment to be there"*

This section of the chapter has examined some 'unreal' aspects of teaching. It is accepted that the act of teaching (to some extent) is always set in a ritual appearance of 'unreality'. In particular, teachers will always engage in some form of image management and will encounter 'creative tensions', not least from their public and private responses to change. While this detail is recognised here, the analysis presented points to the *proliferation* of 'unreal' aspects of teaching. Specifically, it generates questions about the substance of the 'raising standards' agenda and draws a line between notions of 'truth' and 'falsity', 'reality' and 'unreality'. In relation to this research study, it is claimed that teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda are duly affected by the sense of validity they attach to it. The subsequent impact on their work culture may vary however. While some teachers may actively separate 'truth' from 'fabrication' within their practice; others may accept the proliferation of 'unreal' aspects of their work as part of their 'new' role; while others still may embrace these job aspects for the purpose of advancing their own career status. Further, it is probable that some teachers may be less aware than others about the real impact of

these changes to their work culture. These points serve to show, once again, that teachers' responses to the 'raising standards' agenda are likely to be invariably mixed.

Conclusion

As outlined at the beginning, this chapter intends to provide a theoretical basis for thinking about the effects of the 'raising standards' agenda on teachers' work culture. Specifically, for the purposes of this study, the theoretical possibilities presented here illuminate important insights into teachers' perceptions of change. The way that teachers feel about the intensification and proletarianization of their work, as well as the proliferation of 'unreal' aspects within the job, thus remains central to this research. It is likely that such transformations will be differentially experienced by teachers. In particular, these changes may appear more extensive (and/or more intensive) for different teachers in different settings[73]. This may be due to a number of reasons including:

- the relative positioning of the school within the market - policy intervention and pressure being seen in inverse proportion to 'success' (see chapter Two)
- the cultural location of the school - is the school more likely to embrace, accept, or resist change?
- the comparative value-systems of management leaders and the measure of their influence in effecting change
- the extent to which teachers as a group are aware of and have the capacity to act with or against changes to their school and work culture

The danger remains that the ill effects of intensification, proletarianization, and the proliferation of 'unreality' in the job, may go unheeded and unchallenged by teachers themselves. While there have been persistent calls for teachers to organise themselves and act collectively (e.g. Densmore, 1987), the analysis presented here suggests fundamental difficulties with this proposal. Intensification within the job, for example, particularly with respect to time and curriculum demands (A Hargreaves, 1992a), hinders the opportunity for teacher collaboration. Here, the excessive pace of change and the proliferation of new initiatives negates against meaningful teacher involvement. A significant irony is present in proposals for more genuine forms of collegiality, as these can actually contribute to a greater feeling of intensification amongst teachers. This is because teachers' time is already consumed during and out of school hours by a plethora of 'raising standards' initiatives. The perverse reality, therefore, is that teachers may feel that it is easier (and this is not a value judgement) to follow rules than to make them.

From a deskilling perspective, too, the increasing managerialist patterns in schools (Power, Halpin and Whitty: 1997) appear "profoundly anti-democratic" and ignore an imbalance in relations of power (S Robertson: 1997, p661). Within this managerialist paradigm, responsibility for change is entrusted to the level of senior management where there is a tendency towards "speedier and non-consultative decision-making" (Gerwitz, Ball and Bowe: 1995, p97). Indeed, collaborative activity appears more discernible at the top of the hierarchy, than it is below (Simkins, 2000). Hence, there is no sense of increased decision-making participation on the part of teachers (Wylie,

---

[73] Of course, such transformations may also be differentially experienced by different teachers within the same setting (see Part Four of this study).

1994). Further, while the rhetoric of collegiality continues to be espoused at governmental and institutional levels, such sentiment seems to correspond to nothing more than 'feel good fiction' (Hamilton, 1998). In essence, the promise of collegiality appears more illusory than assured:

> *"teacher development, co-operation and 'empowerment' may be the talk, but centralization, standardization and rationalization may be the strongest tendencies"* (Apple and Jungck: 1992, p20).

The above discussions affirm that, far from being separate concerns, the three significant transformations in teachers' work culture form a close integral relationship. Attempts to organise teachers collectively, therefore, need (at the outset) to engage in a critique of existing intensification conditions, alienating professional experiences and illusory rhetorical claims. Moreover, proposals to improve teacher professionalism must firstly examine current workload practices, prevailing conditions of teacher autonomy and the feasibility of professional ideals. These considerations seem central to an appraisal of any 'raising standards' agenda.

Part Four of this study later examines what teachers think about the three identified changes to their work culture. This empirical section (based on data from one school setting) may be used to corroborate, refine or reject some of the theoretical points made here. It also serves to illuminate some new interesting results. Before looking at these, the research methodology used throughout this investigation is duly outlined.

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with describing the research methodology used in this study.

Section One begins by highlighting how the theoretical framework was used to inform the critical focus of this research enquiry. The methodological approach is then examined in section Two. This draws attention to the strong links between method, theory and epistemology which merged in the process of directly investigating the main research question: *what are teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda?* Section three examines the research design and, specifically, the inter-connectedness between research aims, questions and methods. In the appendices, there is an inclusion of the research instruments used for the questionnaire survey and both interviews.

Section Four then deals with the research sample and describes the research in operation, while the research ethics and data analysis process are outlined in section Five. Finally, the research limitations of this study are considered in section Six.

Section One: Theoretical Framework

Ball (1990b, p9) notes that the field of policy analysis has been dominated by commentary and critique rather than empirical research. The research study presented here sought to address this issue by combining a critical policy analysis of the 'raising standards' agenda with an interpretive empirical investigation. This empirical research was conducted among different groups of secondary teachers within one case study

school. Specifically, the data produced was aimed at illuminating those teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda.

In utilising *a critical policy analysis* approach, this research remained underpinned by three important principles. The first of these assumes that the object of the study is not isolated from the wider sociological context in which it takes place (Dale: 1986, Jupp: 1996, Cox: 1996). In essence, this means that education as a source of investigation is firmly embedded and understood within a changing set of historical, economic, and political circumstances (Ball, 1997b). Thus, as chapters Two-Four in this study showed, a critical policy analysis of New Labour's 'raising standards' agenda focuses upon the processes and structures through which this policy agenda is created. This involves not only describing and explaining educational policy as a continuum, but also as a strategically informed and complex set of global, economic, social, political, and ideological circumstances which occurs at a specific point in time. The second theoretical stance guiding this critical policy approach is the recognition that my own values, as well as my epistemological and methodological positions, can covertly or overtly affect the research being carried out. Thus, not only is it recognised that policy as a process is contested (Apple: 1982a, Dale: 1989, Ball: 1990a, 1994a), but also that this contestation owes much to my own (as well as the respondents') interpretive value perceptions.

Critical policy analysis is embedded in a wider field of analytical social research. Speaking from a 'critical social research' approach[74], Harvey (1990, p1) notes that analytical enquiry is informed by

> *"a critical-dialectical perspective which attempts to dig beneath the surface of historically specific, oppressive, social structures".*

At an epistemological level, knowledge is informed by a critical process which attempts to strip away taken-for-granted assumptions. Hence, critique becomes the integral focus for investigation. Since this involves addressing questions in terms of historically specific sets of social relations, it "cannot avoid political issues" (Harvey: 1990, p7). The third theoretical stance which guided this study's critical policy analysis, then, is the recognition that researchers tend towards the position of not only being interested in 'what is going on and why, but also in doing something about it' (Troyna, 1994). This emphasis on a transformative dimension to research need not be as concrete as suggesting alternative solutions to problems. Instead, the principal aim of critical research is to encourage 'practical reflective activity' or 'praxis' (Harvey: 1990, p22). This form of reflective activity (which, as a researcher, also involves me engaging with a critical-dialectical analysis of theory and results) thus "allows us to refine social theory rather than merely to describe social life" (Carspecken: 1996, p3). Care must be taken, however, to ensure that values and facts are 'interlinked but not fused' i.e. it is acknowledged that "the values involved in research findings need not be the same as the values defining our orientation" (ibid., p5).

---

[74] A number of articles and some books attempt to review the field of critical social research, including: Anderson: 1989; Lather: 1991; Carspecken and Apple: 1992; Quantz: 1992; Kinchloe and McLaren: 1994. See Carspeken (1996) for these references.

The theoretical rationale for this empirical study had two strands. Firstly, from a personal/professional perspective, this study represents an exploration of my own interests in the field of education. Here, my experiences and observations of cultural shifts in school practices may be shown to have significantly influenced the determination of this research focus[75]. In particular, this empirical research was informed, in large part, by an ongoing interest in gaining a greater understanding of the transformations to teachers' work culture. Secondly, this research was designed to engage with and contribute to existing knowledge about teachers' practice. Implicit within this rationale was the supposition that teachers' perceptions of change (including their concerns) should be central to this scholarship. Such an assumption was legitimated according to the view that teachers' behaviour will always be influenced (to a large extent) by their attitudes, values and beliefs (see chapters Three and Four). Moreover, an enquiry into teachers' perceptions was deemed necessary for assessing the real impact of the 'raising standards' agenda at school level.

Section Two: The Methodological Approach

The topic of study chosen (*the investigation of secondary teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda*) remains intrinsically related to the theoretical perspective outlined above. The methodology used was thus appropriate to "a critical-dialectic analysis of the social world" (Harvey: 1990, p1). This critical-dialectic dimension served to locate the empirical data within the theoretical context described in chapters Two-Four. At the same time, the theoretical treatise of the study was reconceptualised

---

[75] I have worked for seven years as a full-time secondary school teacher (and Head of Year) in an inner-city comprehensive in London, and have taught for a further three years (in a supply teacher capacity) within a number of different schools in England.

in light of new insights derived from the empirical analysis of the study. This gave the research its essential 'praxiological' (i.e. 'practical reflective') substance (Harvey, 1990).

The methodological approach of this study combined the theoretical and epistemological principles of a critical policy stance with the means to design a research project and, principally, the means to select appropriate research methods of enquiry. A qualitative case study approach was chosen on the grounds of its ability to concentrate on 'the particular' (Ball, 1983) and, specifically, on its ability to deal with "a full variety of evidence, documents, artefacts, interviews and observations" (Yin: 1984, p30). This latter ability of the case study method facilitated the collection of cross-checking accounts from different respondents which in turn were used to assess earlier theoretical suppositions. In addition, the diversity of evidence gathered served to prevent 'method boundedness' (Chia and Walker, 1992) where reliance on a single research method could result in misleading or limited data.

The case study's empirical data was interrogated from the following sources:

1. written documents - in particular, school documentation (such as plans, brochures, Ofsted and LEA reports, articles relating to INSET courses etc.)
2. participant observation data
3. a questionnaire survey
4. data derived from two sets of interviews

Much of the theoretical discussions on the changing culture of teaching served as an important (though, not absolute) theoretical foundation for examining and interpreting

this data. In particular, the three thematic topics identified in the theoretical analysis of chapter Four significantly informed the pre-structured nature of enquiry within both sets of interviews:

- **T1** - this theme referred to the proposition that teachers' work has been subject to a greater process of intensification
- **T2** - this related to the proletarianization thesis – i.e. the view that teachers have become de-skilled in the job
- **T3** - this theme concerned the proliferation of 'unreal' aspects of the job

[see Appendices III and IV]

In addition to informing a large part of the interview questions (and in correspondence with a critical-dialectic approach to analysis), these three themes were 'deconstructed' from the main empirical data presented in chapters Seven-Nine. Hence, new insights into their elaboration were derived from observational data and, indeed, new categories were shown to emerge. In this way, a process of classification developed from a constant 'meanings negotiation' (Gomes, 2000) between:

a) the elaboration of analytical categories based on and oriented by theoretical presuppositions
b) the elaboration of categories based on data, which was guided by such issues as the research focus, the researcher's interpretations of events, the contextual features of the school, and the individual views and characteristics of respondents

Section Three: Research Design

The research design emerged to provide a systematic account and understanding of how the 'raising standards' agenda, formulated and implemented by New Labour, was viewed by teachers in this study. Specifically, the research design established the inter-connectedness between the research aims, questions and methods (see **Appendix V** for an overview). The following sub-section now outlines the inter-relationship between the research aims and questions.

Research aims and questions

Four sets of research aims were identified which were significantly informed by coalescing the main research focus (*what are teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda?*) with the theoretical substance (chapters Two-Four) of this study:

1. **Research Aim 1** set out to:
    a) examine how the case study school responded to the 'raising standards' agenda
    b) investigate aspects of 'lived' culture, where there was evidence of 'raising standards' at work
2. **Research Aim 2** set out to:
    a) gain an initial insight into teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda within this case study context; to specifically explore the meanings teachers attached to the agenda and their perceptions of their role therein and;

to some extent explore teachers' perceptions and assessment of the impact of this agenda on their work culture

b) provide an initial profile of research participants in relation to their biographical details and their personal/professional responses to the 'raising standards' agenda

c) provide the basis for a more in-depth enquiry into the main research question which used semi-structured interview schedules

3. **Research Aim 3** set out to:

   a) provide a more in-depth examination of teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda by using a semi-structured interview schedule

   b) provide a more detailed profile of research participants

   c) examine the relationship between the theoretical treatise of this study and the empirical data presented

4. **Research Aim 4** set out to:

   a) examine in greater detail important aspects of participants' previous interview responses

   b) investigate further links between participants' responses and the theoretical ideas presented in this study (particularly in relation to chapter Four)

   c) question teachers' views and concerns on the future direction of the 'raising standards' agenda

In order to develop and operationalise these aims, the following research questions were posed[76].

1. *How does the case study school respond to the challenges of the 'raising standards' agenda?* (Research Aim **1**)
2. *What does the 'raising standards' agenda mean to teachers in this setting?* (Research Aim 1, **2**, 3)
3. *How do teachers perceive their role in the promotion of the 'raising standards' agenda?* (Research Aim 1, **2**, 3)
4. *What are teachers' perceptions of the impact of 'raising standards' on their own everyday practice and on their cultural working relationships within school?* (Research Aim 2, **3**)
5. *What are teachers' concerns about the 'raising standards' agenda?* (Research Aim 2, **3**, 4)
6. *What are teachers' perceptions of observed changes to notions of self-identity, professional practice and cultural working relationships?* (Research Aim **4**)

Research Methods

In response to research aim 1 and associative research questions **1**, 2 and 3, documentary analysis was used to investigate the case study school's response to the 'raising standards' agenda. This examination made use of discourse analysis techniques in relation to a variety of documentary sources including: the school

[76] Note: the relevant research aim pertaining to each question is given in paranthesis – where a number is highlighted in bold it means that this particular research aim formed the main focus of investigation for that particular question.

prospectus, brochures, newsletters, School Development Plan, High Reliability Project documents, staff handbook etc. Such an analysis provided a theoretical foundation for understanding and explaining the school's value position on 'raising standards', though it was accepted that this value position could not be easily assessed due to the idealistic and promotional substance of the texts themselves (see chapter Six). Further, observational techniques were adopted in an attempt to see how this theoretical stance on 'raising standards' was (at least) partially reflected in 'real practice'[77]. This entailed recording observations in a research notebook and detailing relevant descriptions such as, staffroom conversations and various aspects of teacher-teacher and teacher-pupil interactions. Other relevant observational sources included: notice boards, weekly bulletins, poster displays and 'out of school' activities (egs. homework clubs, 'surgery hours', revision classes, pupil activities etc.).

A questionnaire survey (see **Appendix II**) was used in response to research aim 2 and associative research questions **2**, **3**, 4 and 5. This survey was designed to assess different teacher groups' *initial* responses to the 'raising standards' agenda. This involved examining the meanings teachers attached to 'standards'; exploring their views on official 'raising standards' initiatives and; investigating their strategies in promoting these in the school *and* the classroom. Questions also related to their value perspectives on 'raising standards' and the perceived effects of this agenda on pupils' responses to schooling (in terms of attitudes and learning).

---

[77] Within a sociological perspective on 'culture', it is accepted that many aspects of 'real practice' are complex, tacit and hidden from view. Thus, much of what counts as 'observation' can only be captured by the researcher's subjective account of events. This is not to deny, however, the validity and reliability of results, as these descriptions are accepted (at the very least) as a *partial* representation of 'real practice'.

A semi-structured interview schedule (see **Appendix III**) was deployed aimed at matching the key thematic topics (outlined in section Two) with research aim 3 and research questions 2, 3, 4 and 5. Questions were designed to investigate teachers' perceptions of the impact of the 'raising standards' agenda on their work culture. They also served to further explore previous questionnaire responses on the meanings teachers attached to this agenda, and on their perceptions of their role therein. At the same time, some of the questions presented in the interview schedule were *less structured* inasmuch as they were designed to be both open-ended and flexible (Jupp, 1996). The emphasis here was on developing a more qualitative understanding of teachers' perceptions, whereby participants were encouraged to provide meaningful subjective accounts and to extrapolate further on responses given in the questionnaire survey. Hence, respondents had a significant degree of control over the interview process. In this way, the interview study assumed a social science understanding in which the interviewees (and not only the interviewer) constructed their versions of the social world (Hammersley: 1990, Silverman: 1996).

A second semi-structured interview schedule (see **Appendix IV**) was then employed in response to research aim 4 and associative research questions 5 and 6. Once more, questions were both *pre-structured* and *less structured.* In connection with research question 5, teachers were asked about their assessment on the future direction of the 'raising standards' agenda. As a follow-on from the first interview, participants were also encouraged to examine their previous responses in greater depth (question 6). Hence, attempts were made to promote respondent 'reflexivity' (Hammersley, 1990). As a researcher, I too engaged in a critical-dialectical analysis of participants' previous responses in an attempt to examine closer links with related theoretical ideas.

Section Four: The research sample and process

Three important criteria for the selection of the case study school were identified:

1. it was a state comprehensive - the rationale for this criterion was that state schools are subject to intense political gaze and thus face increasing pressure to incorporate numerous 'raising standards' initiatives
2. it was a 'progressive' school (see chapter Two) - by this, the case study school exhibited (at least, publicly) a whole-hearted acceptance of the 'raising standards' agenda[78]
3. it was not a recognised 'failing' school – the rationale here was that the school's 'core' activities of teaching and learning could (to a large extent) be investigated separately from matters relating to pupil discipline and 'quick fix' managerial solutions

It should be stated also that the case study school was partly selected on personal grounds as I had worked there on a number of occasions in a supply teaching capacity and had made good professional contacts (most notably with the Deputy Head for Curriculum - hereby referred to as the DHC). On the strength of the above criteria, then, I approached the school on January 18th 1999 with a view to conducting my research there. Following the acceptance of my proposal, I visited the school a number of times when I worked as a supply teacher. Accordingly, at the time of data collection I had met and worked alongside a number of teachers. In particular, I had

---

[78] At the time of research, the case study school had adopted many 'raising standards' initiatives aimed (predominately) at securing the maximum academic outcomes for its pupils. Further, the

management of the 'raising standards' agenda (the Headteacher, DHC and HoDs), and those who had to implement the emergent strategies at classroom level (the six mainstream teachers). A gender balance was also considered in the sample (see **Appendix VI**). In the case of both pastoral heads (Heads of Year 8 and 10), this selection was justified on the grounds that, had I chosen Years 9 and 11 (known generally as the 'exam years'), it was likely that the 'raising standards' agenda would have become solely associated with 'academic pressure'[81]. Similarly, it was felt that because Year 7 signified a major transformation in the social and educational lives of pupils, it was likely that the 'raising standards' investigation would have become confused with 'other' social and educational dynamics. The challenge of initially choosing Years 8 and 10 for examination, therefore, was to show that, even in so-called 'non-exam years', the effects of a 'raising standards' policy on teachers (particularly, on pastoral heads) would still be significant. Of course in relation to the actual size and representative character of the overall sample group of teachers, I was inevitably bounded by the constraints of time and resources.

Once the fourteen respondents had been identified, I wrote to each of them explaining about the nature of the study. A copy of the questionnaire was included in this correspondence, together with a brief account of my professional background. It was stressed that the confidentiality of responses would be respected. Respondents were also told that I would provide the school with a confidential report at the end of my study and that this would not contain any personal references. The questionnaires took some time to come back (approximately two months) and I had to contact the

---

who exercised 'extra' responsibility, *excluding* Heads of Year (HoYs) and Heads of Department (HoDs) who were regarded as separate categories.

[81] In the second year of this research, however, both pastoral Heads of Year chosen did become responsible for Years 9 and 11 respectively.

DHC on a number of occasions to 'chase' these up. During this time, I also asked the DHC to provide important school documents for contextual analysis. I continued to visit the school in a teaching capacity and I also attended an INSET day for all staff on the theme of 'literacy'. During this time, all the questionnaires were returned and I met with the DHC to arrange for the first set of interviews to be conducted.

These took place on June 28th 1999 and were conducted over the course of a working week. The composition of the interview sample group was *identical* to that of the questionnaire survey. This provided for an on-going development of the research focus and a more in-depth analysis of respondent profiles. The interview schedule was significantly informed by the questionnaire's findings. An earlier pilot interview was helpful, too, in this regard. In particular, this pilot interview served to 'iron out' some administrative problems such as the wording of questions, and the amount of time allocated to certain research enquiries[82]. The actual research interviews lasted on average between 30 - 40 minutes. They were all recorded and described. All of the interviews were conducted in an allocated interview room, except in those cases where individuals felt they would be more comfortable in their own faculty offices (this mostly applied to Heads of Department). Interviews were largely uninterrupted and on those occasions when the telephone rang, or when a teacher walked unawares into the room, the tape recorder was switched off. The close proximity of the interview room to a classroom meant that some background noise was experienced throughout the interview process. Further, the semi-structured nature of the interview posed a particular challenge as I strived to maintain a research focus while simultaneously

---

[82] This pilot interview was conducted with a teacher from a different secondary school. It was particularly useful in highlighting the fact that 'raising standards' could be interpreted in various different ways and thus needed to be defined clearly if this term was to form the focus of the research.

allowing for the emergence of new, possibly unsuspected, categories (Bernard, 1994). Regardless of these problems and challenges, it was felt that the responses given were both genuine and focused. Following the completion of the first set of interviews, respondents were given a full transcript of the schedule. They were invited to give any relevant feedback. Only three individuals returned their interview transcripts, proposing some minor alterations (mostly, grammatical) to their substance.

The second set of interviews took place during the week beginning Monday January 24th, 2000. It was considered important to conduct this second interview at a later stage to allow adequate time to significantly analyse results from the first set of enquiries. Further, it seemed important to examine teachers' responses over different times of the academic year, since it might be argued that views/concerns may vary throughout summer and winter terms. The interview process took more or less the same form as the first set of interviews described above. Individuals were offered the opportunity of viewing transcripts if they wished, but no-one took up this proposal. This may be due to the fact that the first set of transcripts were discussed with each interviewee prior to the second interview, where they were assured that I would ignore confused phonetic speech and minor grammatical errors in my consideration of the respondents' comments. It may also be due to the fact that the participants felt confident that their responses were being accurately recorded and treated confidentially. Following the completion of the second set of interviews, I wrote to each respondent thanking them for their participation and outlining that I would be sending a copy of the 'school report' in due course. The teachers were informed that this report (which contains confidential material and does not disclose the identity of

---

The pilot interview was also useful in higlighting the need for interview questions to be as unambiguous as possible, given (at times) the abstract nature of enquiry.

respondents) would be held by the DHC in his office. Since the DHC commanded the trust of all respondents, it was hoped that the other participants who wished to examine its contents would approach him. The substance of the report represents a summary of the main conclusions presented in Part Four of this study.

Section Five: Research ethics and the process of data analysis

A strong ethical framework was pervasive throughout the research design. Here, important guidelines were adopted which were partly derived from the work undertaken by Pollard et al (1994). It was felt not only to be important to consider these guidelines prior to the research process, but also, as far as possible, during and after the study. Four ethical considerations were advanced:

1. There was to be full agreement on the part of both researcher and subjects in relation to a) the general explanation of the study b) the declaration of interested parties c) the right of the subjects to withdraw co-operation at any time and d) the ethical guidelines as presented here
2. Full confidentiality was to be maintained at all times
3. The opportunity for all respondents to review individual transcripts of interviews would be provided. This had the added value of furnishing appropriate conditions for respondent validation
4. Due to the political sensitivity of the 'school report', the researcher would protect the anonymity of subjects

From the researcher's perspective, it was important to critically analyse (as much as possible) any personally held value-systems. Thus, a process of 'reflexivity' was employed:

> *"Reflexivity implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer on them"* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

I was consious, therefore, to avoid value-laden judgements which may have challenged the validity of this study and/or the ethical position of my role as 'observer'. It was accepted, however, that this ethical stance may have been both untenable and undesirable. Untenable, because it may have proved impossible to be fully isolated from the research at all times. Undesirable, because to be isolated may have meant relinquishing a personal commitment to 'finding out' more (see next section).

It was accepted that the ethical considerations outlined here could not have been absolute in both nature and practice. Respondents, for example, may not have reached a full understanding of even a general explanation of the study (see 1a above). Perhaps this was necessary, since a more complete explanation of the study may have affected the manner in which they 'reacted' to the research. In relation to ethical guideline no. 2 also, it may not always have been possible to protect the confidentiality of respondents. Individuals, for example, may have felt somewhat 'exposed' by the findings of the 'school report'. Confidentiality, in this regard, may not have been honoured, despite the concealment of their identification. Thus, the notion of confidentiality may become more conflated with specific responses, than with issues of identity. Finally, with regards to ethical guideline no. 4 above, it may prove impossible

to protect the anonymity of at least some subjects. Hence, in relation to the 'school report', the identity of respondents may be revealed by their stated role position.

This brief discussion points to the fact that no ethical guidelines, however rigorous, can account for anomalies. Nevertheless, I would maintain that the provision of *guidelines* was a positive condition that had the likely effect of reducing the probability of unprincipled practice. To this end, such a proviso was very much valued as *part* of the research process.

The analysis of government policies (mainly through the examination of Acts, speeches and policy mechanisms) constituted an important attempt to 'make sense' of New Labour's educational change programme. In particular, this analysis helped to locate the 'raising standards' agenda within a theoretical framework and illuminated important shifts in the culture of schooling. A critical examination of the case study school's documents, in this respect, illustrated how the institution outwardly perceived its role in promoting such change. As highlighted in section One, much of the theoretical treatise of this study was used to inform the research focus of this study. In relation to the questionnaire survey, for example, many of the questions presented reflected a concern for examining teachers' perceptions of *official* 'raising standards' policies. The data derived from this survey was qualitatively interpreted, though frequency tables were also used to compare the responses of different teachers within the sample.

In relation to both interviews, the thematic topics served to guide the process of systematisation and data categorisation. This categorisation was the result of an effort

to develop a critical dialectical relationship between theory and results (as highlighted in section Two). In essence, the analysis of interviews followed a dual process of 'deconstruction' (where data was translated into main analytical units which were largely informed by theory) and 'reconstruction' (where analytical units became refined in light of an active interpretation of evidence). This dual relationship, then, can be understood in terms of "a process of gradually, and critically, coming to know through constant reconceptualisation" (Harvey: 1990, p30). This 'coming to know' process was not without its difficulties, however. As figure II below indicates, the steps involved in the analysis of this study's interview data proved to be both complex and laborious:

Figure II: The Analysis of the Interview Data

Step[83]	Stage of Analysis
1. Listening to recordings several times and transcribing interviews 2. Reading and re-reading empirical studies, government acts, speeches, newspaper articles	**Familiarisation:** Writing notes or comments, generating initial categories, interpreting and utilising 'raw' hypotheses
3. Reviewing the theoretical ideas of the study 4. Comparing the inter-relevance between theoretical discussions and observational data 5. Re-ordering the transcripts - compiling different responses for the same questions	**Preliminary Analysis:** Re-examining the categories and 'raw' hypotheses, making preliminary observations about individuals' particular responses, exploring 'new' aspects of the thematic topics, generating new categories
6. Writing and reviewing the analytic chapters 7. Refining arguments (especially thematic topics) 8. Re-ordering the transcripts - compiling relevant quotes from each respondent in relation to the categories generated by the data 9. The inclusion and exclusion of relevant data	**Final Analysis:** Refining thematic topics and categories, assessing the dialectical relationship between theory and results, interpreting and explaining the data presented, reflecting on findings, linking results with the aims of the study, conclusions

[83] Within each stage of analysis, these steps do not necessarily follow a linear progression.

Section Six: Research Limitations

Since this research study deals exclusively with one secondary school, the basis for empirical generalisations is bounded. While this may be considered a limitation of the research, it is important not to confuse the purpose of this study with its capacity to generalise to an aggregate set of cases. Empirical generalisations are appropriate only when it is shown that the findings presented here typify much of the contemporary thoughts and practices of other teachers in other schools (in England and Wales). Generalisation claims, therefore, require more corroboration beyond the scope of this study. In stating this, the empirical study presented does proffer the grounds for considering the wider applicability of results. In particular, important theoretical inferences may be drawn from the data produced. Moreover, through a process of 'self-referentialism' (Nias, 1989), teachers outside this setting may identify with the perceptions and experiences of the research subjects. This remains a powerful source of validation and explains how the research results can be applied in a more generalised manner. It should be stated, however, that the generalisability of results does not constitute the principal aim of this study.

The probability of researcher bias is omnipresent in all research activity. This is despite the efforts of researchers who attempt to institute some form of 'objectivity' in their practice. The ideal of 'objectivity' remains difficult to achieve, however. This is mainly due to the fact that research practice constitutes a socially constructed process that draws on numerous subjective interpretations of what is valid knowledge. The particular interests, experiences and trajectory of the researcher are thus instrumental in influencing the research design and substantive enquiries of the study. In recognising this fact, there is no reason to suggest that the subjective 'impression'

which a researcher brings to his/her practice necessarily occludes the objectivity of enquiry. As Abraham notes, subjective involvement in research can have the opposite effect:

> *"Objectivity is enhanced through consciousness of our commitments, and of how they influence our pursuit of knowledge, rather than by seeking a pretentious political neutrality"* (Abraham: 1996, p84).

This points to the view that a subjective/political commitment to research may actually enhance the pursuit of 'truth', as problems can be interrogated more thoroughly by those researchers opposed to a more "socially indifferent" perspective (ibid., p84). In acknowledging the importance of a subjective engagement with research, additionally it seems necessary to be critically aware of its restrictions. The study presented here, for example, recognised the potential conflict between my own personal/professional interests and my role as investigator. To this effect, an on-going system of 'self-evaluation' was promoted which attempted to reduce the probability of researcher bias[84]:

> *".. what is crucial [then] for the objectivity of any enquiry - whether it is qualitative or quantitative - is the critical spirit in which it has been carried out"* (Phillips: 1989, p71).

Another inherent feature of all research activity is that individual subjects may 'respond' in different ways to both the researcher and the procedures involved in the study. This may lead to a questioning of the validity of the research. The concepts of

---

[84] In addition, a critical methodological approach to research (see section Two) helped to reduce the probability of researcher bias since it was "based on critical epistemology, not on value orientations" (Carspecken: 1996, p22).

'personal reactivity' and 'procedural reactivity' (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) can be used to elaborate this point. The former concept highlights the fact that the nature of the researcher/respondent relationship will always have some bearing on the responses given. In particular, problems may arise if respondents 'react' to an enquiry in a manner in which they perceive they *should* do so, and/or in a way in which they think corresponds with the researcher's own expectations. To counteract this possibility, I attempted (as far as possible) to draw a 'middle-line' approach in the study, encouraging familiarity for the sake of 'openness', and slightly distancing myself in order to proceed with the planned research schedule. This strategy proved to be challenging. 'Procedural reactivity' was also experienced in this study. This concept refers to the probability that individual subjects will 'respond' diversely to the actual research process. This is mainly due to the fact that, for many respondents, engaging with research is an artificial (and often unfamiliar) practice. In this study, for example, it was felt that some teachers were inexperienced in filling out detailed questionnaires and in engaging in conversations and recorded interviews about their work. It was important, therefore, as a researcher to be critically aware of this issue. To this effect, I attempted (as far as possible) to make the research process appear more 'natural' in its orientation[85].

The research methods adopted in this study were informed by multiple theoretical, methodological, and ethical considerations. Each method employed, however, exhibited a number of limiting features. The use of discourse analysis techniques in relation to school documents, for example, revealed only a partial description of school 'reality'. Also, the use of a questionnaire survey was limited in its attempts to access

---

[85] To this effect, I felt it was helpful to be informal in my research approach e.g. in my manner of dress, in my conversational style of interviewing, and in my attempts to be as unobtrusive as possible

respondents' views. Specifically, this method of data collection failed to provide detailed responses, particularly as teachers consciously appeared to present their 'public personalities' in a favourable light (see chapter Six). In relation to semi-structured interviews, too, the balance between an open-ended and focused enquiry was difficult to achieve. This was often due to the variance between the researcher's and the respondents' particular interests. The former was thus constantly faced with dilemmas and choices concerning the pursuit of particular lines of enquiry. This brief discussion points to the fact that much of what counts as research 'limitations' derives from the intrinsic features of the research methods themselves. These methodological features have been well documented in research literature (see for example, Hitchcock and Hughes: 1989, Cohen and Manion: 1994, Sapsford and Jupp: 1996, Nachmias and Nachmias: 1996, Denscombe: 1998).

Discussions presented in this section point to a critical awareness of the research limitations of this study ranging from issues such as, generalisation claims, subjective bias, respondent 'reactivity', and the restrictive features of research methods. This critical awareness remains central to the validity of this study. Further, the adoption of appropriate 'respondent validation' techniques[86] contributes significantly to the reliability of this study's claims.

---

with regards to the use of certain research instruments (such as the tape recorder and notebook).

[86] 'Respondent validation' (as utilised here) refers to the opportunity for research subjects to judge the authenticity of some of this study's claims. To this effect, respondents were invited to view and amend (where necessary) interview transcripts, and were encouraged to comment on general findings from the first set of interviews as well as from the final 'school report'.

Conclusion

The methodological considerations given above in sections One-Six now provide the basis for examining the empirical section of this study. The following chapters, therefore, outline and analyse the research findings, and set out to discuss their significance in the light of our research focus. The purpose of Part Four of this study, then, is to contribute to a more informed and original understanding of teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda.

Chapter Six: A Case Study Response to the 'Raising Standards' Agenda

Introduction

Within the contemporary context, schools in England and Wales are under increasing pressure to exhibit their responsibility to the 'raising standards' agenda. Thus, despite differences in their pupil intake, socio-economic status, and culture, this commitment remains the priority of every institution. While it may be argued that schools have always given the highest priority to 'raising standards', the distinction now is that they must validate this responsibility. This is a direct consequence of the emergence of new accountability measures and the managerialist pre-occupation with specific organisational processes and outcomes (as outlined in chapter Three). What appears, then, (at least at the surface level) is an outward undertaking on the part of schools to engage with the 'raising standards' agenda. The proliferation of school promotion documents (such as prospectuses, brochures and summary inspection reports) may be given as evidence of this increased public engagement. Internal documents too (such as school and staff development plans, staff handbooks and pre/post Ofsted plans) clearly advance the 'raising standards' message as a mantra for 'progressive' organisational change.

The examination of school documents, then, forms an important foundation for evaluating the case study school's response to the 'raising standards' agenda. It is accepted that such a contextual analysis may only reveal a partial description of school

'reality'. This is because much of what is documented in school texts is idealistic in orientation - due partly to a response to market needs and, in other part, to an effort to assimilate values of 'best practice'. Nevertheless, it is contended here that an investigation of the school's texts is meaningful inasmuch as it highlights how the institution perceives its role in the promotion of the 'raising standards' agenda. In addition, it is acknowledged that the school has some influence over the determination of this 'new' role, though it is accepted that 'outside' pressures continue to significantly mould its character. In examining textual data, then, this chapter attempts to illustrate how the case study school is presented as a 'progressive' organisation. A number of documentary sources are utilised in this investigation, including: school and staff development plans, the ICT (Information and Communications Technology) plan, prospectuses, the post-Ofsted plan, a recent LEA report, the IIP (Investors in People) scheme, HRS documents, and the staff handbook. These texts are examined in section Two of this chapter.

A critical analysis of these documents is useful in determining an initial profile of the case study school's response to 'raising standards'. However, for the purposes of a more informative understanding, aspects of the 'lived' culture of the school also need to be considered. To this effect, the use of participant observation data is incorporated into this research. This involves the researcher cataloguing various observations and experiences in a research notebook. The details of this investigation are presented in section Three of this chapter. The following section then proceeds by looking at the results from a questionnaire survey which was administered to the fourteen teachers in the sample group. The purpose of this survey is to provide the earliest profile of research participants in relation to their biographical details and their

personal/professional responses to the 'raising standards' agenda. Specifically, this questionnaire explores the meanings that these teachers attach to the agenda and their perceptions of their role therein. To some extent, also, it serves to examine teachers' perceptions of the impact of this agenda on their work culture.

In advance of the documentary analysis, Section One now looks at the features of our case study school. This examination helps to locate the organisation within a unique social and cultural context. In particular, the details presented here proffer an insight into the school's 'progressive' character.

Section One: Features of the case study school

Lee Valley School (a pseudonym) is a large state maintained community comprehensive for 11 -18 year old pupils. Its catchment area is predominantly middle class in orientation and is of a 'rural and urban' description. The pupil population is co-educational in character and totals 1784 in number - 275 of whom are in the sixth form. The percentage of pupils with English as a second language is 1.1%, and 4% of the pupil population are in receipt of free school meals. There are 94 full-time teaching staff, 22 part-time teachers and 4 NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) in total[87]. Further, there is a strong representation of PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) students in the school - particularly in the languages faculty.

The school is located in a suburban village in the south of England. It operates on one main site (though the playing fields are severely dislocated). While the physical space

[87] These figures are based on the academic year 1998-1999.

of this site is large, there are areas of the school where there is overcrowding - this is particularly felt in periods of pupil movement between classes. The school has been inspected by Ofsted twice. The first of these took place in January 1994, and the most recent in November 1997. The last report highlighted that Lee Valley was "a good school with some very good features". In particular,

> *"the high quality of the teaching is a strength, and pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. There is a clear educational direction for the development of the school. Links with the community, and particularly partnerships with local employers are outstanding"* (Ofsted Summary Report, 1998).

While this Ofsted report did point to a number of 'key issues' to be addressed (see section Two), other positive features were duly mentioned. These included: the organisational efficiency of the school (particularly in areas of finance and administration)[88]; the 'response' of the school to the previous inspection's direction and; the continual achievement of good academic standards which lie above national 'norms'. Regarding this last point, a fairly consistent pattern of academic results emerge over recent years at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 levels[89]. This pattern[90] is now given below in tables 1 and 2:

---

[88] Here the Ofsted report notes that "the school gives good value for money".
[89] Where some years show a reasonable percentage divergence from others, this is often explained by many teachers in the research sample group as a natural variation in pupils' abilities across different year cohorts.

Table 1: Key Stage 3 results since 1995 (based on percentage figures of level 5 and above) [91]

Key Stage 3		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
English	% Level 5 and above	69	59	73	79	76	74
Maths	% Level 5 and above	69	67	78	69	75	79
Science	% Level 5 and above	63	62	77	68	66	78

Table 2: Key Stage 4 results since 1992 (based on percentage figures of 5 GCSE grades A*-C)

Key Stage 4	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
% 5 GSCE grades A*-C	53	56	52	60	58	53	47	57	65

Over four years (1996-2000) an average of 99% of all pupils achieved at least one GCSE A*-G. In addition (and in conjunction with national trends), girls seem to outperform boys in GCSE academic scores[92]. The following trends have emerged

---

[90] Particular interest should be given to the 1998, 1999, and 2000 results, since these represent the years in which the research was conducted.
[91] SATs (Standard Attainment Targets) figures are only available from 1995.
[92] It should be added, however, that this gender gap is not costant and is actually reversed at A Level.

since the school began to monitor these gender statistics closely in 1998 (see table 3 below):

Table 3: Differences between male and female performances at Key Stage 4 (based on percentage figures of 5 GCSE grades A*-C)

Key Stage 4	1998	1999	2000
Male % achieving 5 GCSE grades A*-C	42	54	60
Female % achieving 5 GCSE grades A*-C	52	61	70

With regards to the organisation of teaching groups, the school incorporates mixed ability, banding and setting arrangements[93]. In Year 7 pupils are taught in mixed ability tutor groups for most subjects. In Year 8 pupils are set for mathematics, languages and PE, with banding in Humanities - they are taught in mixed ability groups for the remainder of the subjects. Year 9 mirrors the same arrangements as Year 8 apart from English which places pupils in two broad ability bands. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are taught in mixed ability groups within arts, technology and some other 'option' subjects. The English and science Faculties have two broad bands of ability. Mathematics and languages continue to set their pupils and Humanities introduces setting where possible. Learning support groups operate in Key Stage 3 in most faculties and are designed to meet the particular special educational needs of a smaller number of pupils. Pupils in these groups have full access to the National Curriculum,

unless it has been formally disapplied in individual cases. In Key Stage 4 pupils with special educational needs are integrated as much as possible within the setting arrangements unless the National Curriculum has been disapplied as for Key Stage 3 or for work-related focused curriculum.

The wide-ranging sets for some subjects (together with the academic results at Key Stages 3 and 4) appear to confirm Ofsted's perception that at Lee Valley School pupils "represent a full range of ability". Regarding attendance figures, the school performs well with the percentage of half days missed through unauthorised absence over the years 1998-2000 amounting only to 0.4%, 0.25% and 0.7% respectively. Once pupils complete their compulsory education, most stay on to attend Lee Valley's Sixth Form college. This figure amounts to an average of 50% of the pupil population[94] over the same period (1998-2000). Also, an average of 28% of the Year 11 population attend other Further Education Colleges, 7% enrol with Training Agencies, while 13% enter into full-time employment (including Modern Apprenticeships). Further, an average of 4% are shown to be either unemployed, settled elsewhere, or their future 'destination' is unknown.

The emphasis on academic performance is a predominant feature of Lee Valley School. Here, the plethora of schemes designed to enhance academic grades reveals the school's 'progressive' pursuit of 'raising standards'. Exam study skills, for example, are taught to pupils throughout the Year groups. Numerous testing programmes, too, are adopted by the school for the purposes of evaluating pupils' academic ability and

---

[93] 'Banding' is where pupils are placed in a number of broad ability groups with parallel classes within each band. 'Setting' is a more precise method of grouping pupils in individual classes and is based strictly according to academic ability within each subject area.
[94] Year 11's pupil population fluctuates around the figure of 300 each year.

predicting future outcomes. These include: CATs (Cognitive Abilities Tests) for Years 7 -10 inclusive; YELLIS (Year 11 Information System)[95] and ALIS (A-Level Information System) exams; the MEP (Maths Enrichment Programme) which is used to measure pupils' ability (Years 7-10) against international performances and; the CAME (Cognitive Acceleration in Maths Education), CASE (Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education)[96] and ERT (Edinburgh Reading Tests) programmes which are predominantly aimed at Year 7 pupils. All the results from these tests (as well as from Termly exams) are stored in an information database. Pupils who may be in danger of not reaching their desired targets at GCSE level (particularly 'borderline C' pupils) are singled out for attention. Thus, it is common practice for extra revision classes and lectures on exam techniques to be provided for these pupils. In addition, Easter and Summer schools are organised to enhance GCSE grades across the ability range. A mentoring scheme is also in operation where the emphasis is on the achievement of personal academic targets. Further, an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) programme is in place for pupils with special educational needs, a Reading Acceleration Programme is promoted at Lower School level (Years 7-9), and a literacy strategy is advanced for all Year groups.

Lee Valley is committed to developing closer links with 'outside' agencies and this forms another important 'progressive' feature of the organisation. This is borne out by the school's, more accurately the SMT's (Senior Management Team's), commitment to innovative projects such as the HRS and the IIP schemes. Both programmes (discussed in section Two) highlight the need for the school to adopt more 'effective'

---

[95] "Run by the University of Durham, the YELLIS system gauges performance against national data. Used with the 'chances graph' it provides the opportunity to set meaningful targets for pupils, evaluate performance and identify causes of underachievement" (Lee Valley Staff Handbook: 1999, 2000).

strategies for resource management. Closer links with the community, too, are established through the development of a vast array of adult education courses. In addition, extra-curricular activities are organised for all Year Groups to support local and national theatre groups, museums and art galleries. Sixth Form pupils also assist local primary children with their reading, and a comprehensive transition programme is established for prospective Year 7 candidates. Communications with parents are both effective and regular[97]. Strong links with local businesses are also evident. In Year 10, 'Industry Day' is established where community and national employers are invited to make presentations with a view to informing and attracting future applicants. In January 1998, the school was able to secure technology college status with support from the private sector. This meant that some £250,000 of capital was deployed to the school in addition to recurrent funding of £300,000 over three academic years. The bulk of this investment funded a new technology centre worth £400,000. In addition, an Arts Centre and new Sixth Form block were established.

The above discussions point to Lee Valley School as being both an energetic and 'progressive' organisation. The following documentary analysis develops this claim by examining how the school perceives its role in the promotion of the 'raising standards' agenda.

---

[96] Note the language here - the stress on 'acceleration' highlights an 'intensification model of learning' at work (see chapters Two and Four).

[97] In the last Ofsted report (1997) a parental questionnaire survey (of 658 responses) recorded that more than 80% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the two statements:

- 'I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)'
- 'The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress'

Section Two: Text production and the support for 'raising standards'

Lee Valley's support for the 'raising standards' agenda is manifest throughout the substance of its own school documentation. 'Public' texts (such as prospectuses, newsletters, community education programmes and summary inspection reports), for example, often reveal the school's 'official' perception of its role in 'raising standards'. This is perhaps most evident in relation to the school prospectus, which may be regarded as the principal marketing instrument designed to attract new applicants and consolidate the school's positive self-image. It is no surprise, therefore, that within this document Lee Valley declares a primary interest in demanding "high standards in all that it does". The term 'standards', however, appears to be defined in various ways - at times relating to values of "discipline, courtesy and dress" and, at other times, referring specifically to the "quality of human relationships". Nonetheless, perhaps the clearest expression of the term rests with a thoroughly academic meaning:

> *"It is the philosophy of the school to encourage all pupils to reach the highest academic standards of which they are capable"* (School Prospectus: 1999, 2000).

This purposeful attachment of 'standards' to 'academic performance' may be seen as a significant reflection of the government's stress on an 'authoritative' definition of the term. To illustrate, no less than a quarter of Lee Valley's prospectus is taken up by an analysis of the most recent examination results (broken down by individual subjects). Also included here is a comparative critique of current performances with previous exam results and recent national trends. In addition, within the latest Ofsted summary report (which was made available to all parents) similar weight is attributed to such a treatise of exam results.

In other ways, Lee Valley's prospectus endorses much of New Labour's current educational thinking and rhetoric on 'standards'. Consequently, support is manifest for the improved provision of: home-school partnerships (in terms of contracts, homework regulation and communication arrangements); expanded curricular choices; extensive setting arrangements; routine monitoring and assessment procedures; firm links with local businesses and; support for a 'lifelong' approach to learning. The latter provision, in particular, serves to underline the school's augmenting public commitment to the 'raising standards' agenda. Here, the school actively tenders out its resources with a view to expanding the provision of adult education courses. These courses are predominantly aimed at supporting the academic as well as the general learning opportunities of the community at large. They range extensively from programmes relating to computer skills, arts and crafts, cookery, sport, languages, and general interest subjects. The establishment of a new Arts Centre, too, which attracts all kinds of entertainers (both locally and nationally) has helped to secure the school's strong profile in the community. This venture has proved not only to be successful from a publicity perspective, but also provides a profitable source of income for the school.

In addition to 'public' texts, 'internal' documents are also used to support the 'raising standards' agenda. Such texts include: the school and staff development plans; the LEA and post-Ofsted action plans; the ICT scheme; the staff handbook and; the HRS programme. In many ways, these texts not only reflect the 'official' endorsement of 'raising standards', but they also serve to operationalise a strategic managerial response to this agenda. In a Foucauldian sense, one could say that the 'raising

standards' discourse (language, ideas, concepts), embedded in these documents, becomes 'institutionalised' i.e. constitutive of the social reality of the school. Thus, the 'raising standards' agenda moves beyond the publicity level to form part of the frames of action which individual teachers adopt - though (as pointed out in chapter Four) this need not always be considered as an overtly controlling process. It is asserted, therefore, that 'internal' texts contribute significantly to the implementation of accepted 'raising standards' ideals. Let us examine this claim further by looking at some examples.

Lee Valley's post-Ofsted action plan is a direct response to the most recent school inspection. Significantly, it represents a six year plan (1998-2004) and exemplifies the future policy direction of the school i.e. the plan for 'what needs to be done'. In this sense, the post-Ofsted action plan symbolises perhaps the most consequential text for change. All the 'key issues' highlighted for address in the inspection report are invoked within this plan. These are operationalised as different strands of action are identified side by side with the resources to be allocated and the personnel that are responsible for such change. The resultant action plan is rationally organised around "intended outcomes" which are defined (often loosely) at both organisational and pupil levels. Here, "measures of success" are determined which inevitably reinforce the need for the establishment of a tight target-setting culture. To illustrate this point, I would like to refer to one such 'key issue' which was highlighted in the last inspection report - the requirement for INSET to make a greater contribution to 'raising standards'. Here, 'success' is deemed to be measured according to the school's ability to annually monitor the training needs of the staff. This involves:

> *"All managers of Faculty Teams, Year Teams, and Cross-Curricular Teams to have a written record of their identified training needs and to assess the impact of staff training within their areas"* (post-Ofsted Action Plan: 1998-2004).

An adjunct to this measure of 'success' involves linking the identification of training needs with a "specific reference to the raising of standards". Another 'key issue' may also be proffered for brief examination here - the requirement to 'extend the range of teaching and learning styles'. In relation to this issue, 'measures of success' are identified according to: the capacity of individual staff to record and illustrate an extension of their teaching and learning styles; the ability of teachers to record evidence of "increased levels of pupil initiative during lessons" and; the capacity of faculty areas to demonstrate effective shared practice.

In highlighting these two 'key issues', one can conceive the enormous difficulty in their proposed operationalisation. From a workload perspective alone, it is clear that considerable attention needs to be directed towards their effective implementation. Yet within the post-Ofsted plan itself, such proposals represent only two issues out of a total of eight that need to be addressed. In addition, the school is faced with a plethora of other more pressing daily concerns, over and above the advent of new initiatives (which sometimes lie in conflict with existing schemes[98]). While it is not my intention to critique these issues here in any further depth, the point to be made is that the operationalisation of 'raising standards' initiatives is a messy and complex affair.

---

[98] By way of illustration, the PRP (Performance Related Pay) proposal may be shown to lie in conflict with previous appraisal arrangements in the school. While the latter concentrates primarily on peer observation and review, the former proposal sees the appraisal issue almost exclusively in managerialist terms. Thus, with respect to PRP, 'teacher effectiveness' is directly linked to notions of

In particular, so-called 'measures of success' prove to be difficult to define and measure - how can one, for example, measure with some degree of accuracy 'increased levels of pupil initiative during lessons', or 'the impact of training on staff with specific reference to the raising of standards'? The problem here is that within 'authoritative' systems of organisation, as 'outcome' values become increasingly sublimated, the layers of monitoring and 'target-setting' procedures augment. In other words, the school's mode of operation becomes increasingly systems-based in orientation as it perceives 'all that it does' in terms of the identification of so-called 'clearly defined outcomes'.

The pursuit of 'raising standards' goals customarily provides the rationale for such a managerialist approach to change. As mentioned earlier, the post-Ofsted action plan symbolises perhaps the most significant text for change. The LEA Annual Report for Lee Valley School (1999) reinforces the significance of this plan as it highlights the two 'key issues' mentioned above as "priority areas" for change[99]. In particular, this report demonstrates well the earlier point that as 'raising standards' goals become increasingly 'defined', there ensues a proliferation of monitoring and target-setting procedures. To illustrate, let's examine 'key issue' One again - the requirement for INSET to make a greater contribution to 'raising standards'. With regards to this concern, the LEA report suggests:

- A three stage review - find out what the course was about soon after and record; examine the effect on teaching 3-6 months later and; explore the effects on pupils 6-12 months after course

---

professional/competitive advancement. The contradictory nature of 'raising standards' initiatives is a theme which is referred to again in chapter Seven.

[99] In its report it only highlights one other 'priority area' - "building on partnership links with the primary schools" (LEA Annual Report: 1999).

- The INSET input form should include a management section as an appropriate category for accountability

Also, in relation to 'key issue' Two - the requirement to 'extend the range of teaching and learning styles' - suggestions include:

- developing a proforma to support faculty monitoring
- evaluating schemes such as CAME (Cognitive Acceleration in Maths Education) in relation to pupils' progress and building it into schemes of work

While I do not wish to engage in a considered critique of these suggestions, the purpose in highlighting this LEA report is to show that, in conjunction with the original inspection process and the resultant post-Ofsted plan (with significant input from the SMT), the school's response to 'raising standards' is being supervised in a thoroughly managerialist direction. As outlined in chapter Three, this requires that the school functions within a tight target-setting culture which recognises the pivotal role of leadership authority and the agency of systems-based change. Such a managerialist approach is ultimately legitimated by the pursuit of mechanistic educational 'outcomes'.

In relation to other 'internal' documentary sources, this managerialist direction for change remains visible. The staff handbook, for example, contributes significantly to the frames of action which individual teachers adopt with regards to the 'raising standards' message. Here, details of staff development opportunities are clearly allied to the organisational benefits which may be accrued from training. Crucially, such

opportunities are linked to a 'standards fund' where staff are made aware that development in their training will be closely monitored and evaluated with regard to a) the impact of the course on their teaching b) the impact on pupil outcomes and c) cost effectiveness factors. Elsewhere in the text, staff are informed of the value of monitoring and mentoring procedures as well as data systems which are used to 'track' the abilities of their pupils. The reporting process, too, is outlined in conjunction with efforts to ensure that an "assessment of attitude should be relative to the ability of the pupil". Within the staff handbook, then, the 'raising standards' agenda appears synonymous with the message of 'raising academic performances'.

This correlation is persistent throughout the School Development Plan (SDP). Here, no less than seven of the eleven 'key goals' of the school are directly linked to academic targets (the 'other' goals, it may be argued, are associative)[100]. Clear references to exam performances, too, are made throughout the text with a particular stress on the continual need to improve 'standards':

- *"Our Key Stage 3 results continue to be impressive. It will be an important aim to maintain these standards"*
- *"For the current Year 10 cohort we have CAT (Cognitive Abilities Tests) scores which predict a 52% 5 A*-C pass rate. This sets a minimum, to which we need to add a degree of challenge"* [source: School Development Plan, 1999]

[100] These key goals have been extracted from 1998-1999 School Development Plan - they are updated each year but, in a general sense, only in relation to a moving set of targets. One such goal includes: 'to achieve at least 55% at 5 or more A*-C with an average of 40.6 for our present Year 11 cohort (1999)'. Examples of 'other' (more associative) goals include: 'implement the ICT strategy' and 'review our teaching and learning methodology/styles'.

An ICT (Information and Communications Technology) plan is also set out in the SDP outlining provisions for upgrading and expanding existing school technology. This plan is explicitly linked to the school aim that: 'by the year 2001, there will be a 5 A*-C pass rate of 75%'[101]. Elsewhere in the SDP, individual faculties are encouraged to outline their own specific targets for 'change, improvement and maintenance'. Inevitably, this involves linking their aims to the school's objective of 'raising academic standards' - though there is room to discuss the 'process' through which this is done alongside an intended list of 'outcomes'. Also included in the SDP, there's support for the HRS project. The IIP model, too, is endorsed and is directly linked to the school aim: 'to have highly motivated and qualified staff'. Particular goal statements include:

- To use occupational standards to further enrich the work of the support staff
- To create an annual staff review process for support staff
- To ensure regular review and development [Staff Development Plan, 1999]

These goals highlight the fact that individual teachers' identity, their perceived 'effectiveness' in the job, as well as their bargaining and negotiating rights, are increasingly subject to intensified managerial judgement. As highlighted in chapter Three, this constitutes a professional re-focus of management-teacher relations.

Within the SDP Lee Valley presents itself as a school "demonstrating the characteristics of a High Reliability Organisation". While this 'official' stance is

---

[101] Interestingly, this GCSE figure of 75%, which is adapted from the HRS project, is firmly linked with an increase in technology provision. This is despite the fact that there is no firm evidence to suggest that a pupil's learning abilities is positively enhanced by the use of computers. More critical questions, therefore, need to be asked such as: 'how often are computers made accessible to pupils?';

somewhat challenged by 'lived' cultural accounts (see section Three), the HRS project nevertheless serves as a significant catalyst for change. Specifically, this change reflects an 'authoritative' approach to school effectiveness. Recalling discussions in chapter Three, an 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness is one which exhibits the following characteristics:

- it is managerialist in its orientation and promotes a principal faith in systems-based change and leadership expertise
- the model is normative - prescriptive in its presentation and acritical in its application
- the model promotes education as a technical enterprise - this has implications for the way schooling is perceived and notions of 'effectiveness' are advanced

It is claimed here that the 'authoritative' substance of the HRS project forms another significant part of the frames of action which the school adopts in response to the 'raising standards' agenda. Lee Valley, for example, subscribes (at least 'officially') to the HRS vision: 'schools get it right, first time, every time' and 'pupils succeed every time'. The HRS action plan (1998-2000), in particular, resonates these 'authoritative' sentiments as numerous prescriptive targets are delineated in conjunction with technical educational 'outcomes'. Among the HRS goals which are set out in this plan, much emphasis is attributed to the manipulation of data for the purposes of "routinely generating benchmarking within and between schools". 'Early intervention', too, is evoked in the interests of pupils' academic development and specific targets are set for different age groups in the school. Provisions are also made for all school years

---

how is technology instruction taught in the school?' and; 'how is the computer utilised by the pupil in his/her learning?'

to be tested annually outside of school Termly exams. Further, departments are encouraged to 'learn from the best' and to assess themselves against 'clear effectiveness' criteria.

It is claimed here that, in conjunction with the HRS emphasis on academic targets and data analysis, the 'authoritative' thinking behind the project remains instrumental in transforming school cultural practices. Discourse (language, ideas, concepts) is significant in this regard as the school is continually exposed to such managerialist strategies as 'tracking', benchmarking', 'predictive targets', 'auditing', and 'evaluation cycles'[102]. It is significant to note, too, that at the outset of the project a number of 'key articles' were identified for dissemination to the participant schools. These deal almost exclusively with the unproblematic translation of business ideas to school culture[103]. Among the articles, Stringfield (1998) - a leading proponent - claims that the HRS project has the capacity to proffer "the rudiments of a science of education". Under this proposition, teaching is presented as a discipline and teachers, to use the words of David Reynolds (another leading proponent), are regarded "more like technicians":

> *"Teachers need a methodology that they can follow which has been proved to work. In the past they have been expected to concentrate on developing their own ways of working"* (both quotes, TES: July 17, 1998).

---

[102] These concepts have been introduced to Lee Valley through a series of INSET days, talks, and reports from HRS representatives within the school. Such ideas are also enthusiastically supported by educationalists who take an 'authoritative' school effectiveness perspective (including members of the present government and its quasi-representative organisations). One must recognise the school's support for this 'authoritative' position, too, since the SMT (in particular) has some agency in affecting the change direction of the school.

[103] The articles themselves may be considered perfectly valid as set within their own traditions and historical/social experiences. What I take issue with, however, is firstly the unproblematic translation

Note the 'progressive' tone of the above quote (i.e. 'the past is the problem') and the inherent low trust attributed to notions of teacher professionalism (see also chapter Eight). In addition, within the assumptions of a 'science of education', there is the belief that schools can "regularly respond to potentially disastrous situations" and be "alert to surprises or lapses" (Stringfield, 1998). 'Predictive targets', 'early interventions', 'benchmarking' and the adoption of an 'intensification model of learning'[104] are all legitimated, therefore, according to the perceived need to avoid potential 'disasters' (such as poor levels of attendance, academic results, pupil behaviour etc.).

Throughout the course of this research, the validity of this 'science of education' is seriously critiqued. In particular, such an 'authoritative' approach to teaching is scrutinised on the grounds that it fails to reflect the reality of school life. The following section addresses this concern by focusing on aspects of Lee Valley's everyday response to the 'raising standards' agenda.

Section Three: Exploring aspects of the 'lived' culture of the school

My frequent visits to Lee Valley as both a researcher and teacher gave me some valuable insight into the everyday (or 'lived') cultural practices of the school[105]. Here, a research notebook was utilised to record relevant observations such as conversations, events, aspects of classroom activity and general comments about daily

---

of such ideas from business to school culture and, secondly, their use as an ideological tool to effect 'authoritative' pedagogical change.

[104] Stringfield, in addressing the school on an INSET day (March 26, 1996), comments: "There is a lot of time wasted in schools. We tend to say 'five minutes lost, who cares?' Over a year this is a

school routines. Particular attention was given in these notes to the manner in which the 'raising standards' agenda was both presented and developed in the school. The following general observations, therefore, outline certain aspects of the school's real-life response to the 'raising standards' agenda. Significantly, some of the details presented here appear at variance with the 'official' response outlined earlier. This may be explained in large part by the previous observation that, 'officially', schools are increasingly compelled to publicly (and therefore positively) engage with all aspects of the 'raising standards' agenda. In reality, however, some 'raising standards' initiatives may prove difficult to implement in practice. This may be due to a number of reasons including the unfeasibility of their theoretical substance, the inadequate provision of resources, the intensification of existing workload, or the school's aversion (tacit or otherwise) to 'authoritative' dictats. Accordingly, we must acknowledge the school's (and particularly, the SMT's) agency in opposing (a well as supporting) the managerialist direction of change.

At surface level, Lee Valley's 'official' response to the 'raising standards' agenda appears to manifest itself in daily school life. In particular, the plethora of 'raising standards' initiatives which are promoted in text format seem to be developing and functioning within the school. The stress on academic performance, too, is conspicuous in customary practice. To illustrate, at the time of research the school had just appointed a new senior teacher whose primary responsibility it was to be in charge of assessment issues; GCSE pupils (especially, at 'borderline C' level) were being actively identified for special attention; classroom notices informed the pupils of exam 'successes' at Key Stages 3 and 4; targets were being set for all pupils in the

---

large factor". Such sentiments demonstrate a strong support for an 'intensification model of learning'.

school (via the mentoring programme) and; after-school homework clubs were already in operation. The school had also for the first time begun an Easter Revision course for GCSE pupils. My own participation in this course (as a mathematics tutor) gave me insight into what this really meant to the staff involved. Most seemed to agree that this course was very beneficial for the pupils. Specifically, it was deemed useful on the pragmatic grounds that it prepared the pupils well for the forthcoming exams. As one Deputy Head put it: "the kids have picked up a lot of very useful exam hints and short-cuts this week". Some teachers believed that this course was useful for them too. In particular, they felt that if the pupils 'succeeded' in the exams, this would reflect well on their teaching. One tutor, ever-mindful of this contemporary stress on 'teacher effectiveness', insisted on teaching his own time-tabled GCSE classes throughout the course:

> *"This course is important. I want the Head to see that I've done a good job this year. Good grades will impress upon him that I've done a good job".*

The importance attached to academic performance in Lee Valley is further borne out by conversations with staff. The Deputy Head for Curriculum (DHC), for example, talked of the emergence of a new 'exam culture'[106]. He also referred to the school's new policy focus of comparing the exam performances of different faculties. One consequence of this was that Heads of Department (HoDs) were mindful of the need to present their departments in a positive light (especially to the Headteacher).

---

[105] Throughout the two years of research I had visited the school on more than forty occasions.
[106] To illustrate, at the beginning of the academic school year (September 4th, 2000) I worked as a maths supply teacher for a week. During this time, I administered MEP (Maths Enrichment Programme) tests to Years 7-10 inclusive. Having spoken to a number of pupils in various classrooms, it became clear that exams had become customary practice in the school. Many commented, for example, that throughout the year they would undergo many tests. Interestingly, it was apparent to them that these MEP exams were only used for data information purposes. Indeed, they appeared to accept (unquestionably) the fact that they would get no feedback on their exam performance.

Further, there was a clear awareness of one another's exam performances and of Lee Valley's 'league position' in comparison to other (especially, local) schools. Indeed, this appreciation of how 'others' were doing was not necessarily confined to 'within school' or even local boundaries. The following quote was taken from the Head of Mathematics in his address to a group of Year 10 pupils at the beginning of their first lesson of the academic year:

> *"Like Hungary we give homework every night [...] we compete with the rest of the world with 'statistics', as well as 'shape and space'. But the rest of the world tell us that the English are rubbish with 'number'. While we are getting better, we still have a long way to go"* (September 5, 2000).

The above sentiments place great value on a certain form of 'evidence-based' research and, in particular, reveal an open acceptance of a 'progressive' stance on educational 'standards' (as outlined in chapter Two).

While it is clear that 'external' pressure continues to significantly shape the frames of action in which the school operates, there was evidence to suggest that Lee Valley still retained some autonomy in affecting the future direction of change. In terms of the organisation of classes, for example, the school had a policy of allowing Department Heads to decide their own setting arrangements. According to the DHC, Ofsted "didn't like this" procedure, favouring a more "whole school approach" instead. As a result, the school was compelled to develop a written school policy explaining this setting arrangement system, but it still held firm to its original proposals. To cite another example of school autonomy, Lee Valley continued to take a proactive role in developing its own teacher appraisal scheme. This programme, in the words of the DHC, proposes a "non-threatening share of good practice" (all quotes: June, 1999).

While most of the staff I had spoken to regarded this as a valuable initiative, they nevertheless acknowledged that its 'spirit' would eventually be compromised by the advent of the government's PRP scheme. What these two examples of school autonomy thus serve to highlight is that while the school aims to be more proactive in terms of policy provision, it remains continually bounded by 'external' pressures.

In stating this, the relative autonomy of the school can also manifest itself in its capacity to mediate certain aspects of present policy provision. In this sense, 'autonomy' translates to a meaning of 'independence of thought' and an ability to 'critique policy from within'. While it may be argued that this form of autonomy constitutes only a partial source of independence, very often it represents the single applied option open to a school - particularly as it remains faced with an increasing list of 'authoritative' dictats. Such a limited form of autonomy was apparent, for example, in an on-going critique of the HRS project. At the outset of this scheme, the school had little idea about the scale of work involved in participation. Unsurprisingly, therefore, it refused at times to co-operate with the numerous conditions made upon them (particularly in relation to time demands). Most notably, on one occasion the school declined to co-operate when it was requested to re-schedule its INSET programme plans to accommodate the visit of a leading American proponent.

Concerning the ideals of the project, most staff that I spoke to commented that HRS goals were simply too unrealistic. They also felt that the project failed to 'connect' with teachers. Specifically, the use of comparative analogies to describe the school organisation (such as the 'flight control tower' and 'nuclear plant') was widely viewed upon as unhelpful. As one teacher put it:

> *"I don't think the school really takes HRS seriously anymore. It just doesn't capture the reality of what we do"* (September 4, 2000).

Thus, although the school continues to be significantly influenced by the HRS project (see section Two), there is a sense that this authority is somewhat mediated and tempered by a considered critique of its claims. Much of this critique is concentrated at SMT level - though staff concerns appear to have filtered through to this level. In the light of these observations, then, the review claims of one leading HRS proponent appear (at the very least) hopeful:

> *"Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of HRS ideas and many are implementing suggested expectations, behaviours and strategies; attitudes considered necessary for success. Ideas are passed around and discussion regarding elements of high reliability are commonplace in these schools"* (HRS Newsletter: Autumn, 1998).

The school's mediation of HRS policy is primarily aimed at making sense of and providing meaning for change. Thus, the school is conscious of its own role in negotiating the future direction of change. As the DHC put it:

> *"We're an independent school. We didn't take HRS fully into account, we incorporated ideas instead. I mean, one good thing about the project is the 'tracking' of kids"* (June 16, 1999).

This mediation process is applied across the school policy domain. Thus, in relation to numerous 'raising standards' initiatives, such a process allows the school to mould its own response (however limited) to change. Inevitably, 'mediation' draws attention to

a number of problematic features associated with policy implementation. The remainder of this section now briefly highlights some of these problematic features. My meetings and conversations with the DHC[107] form the main source of data from which these observations can be made. In section Four and the forthcoming chapters, a wider data source is utilised to corroborate such findings.

A dominant critique of performance measurement (particularly, the 5 A*-C statistic) is that it does not give a comprehensive picture of how well the school is doing. Raw results thus, in the words of the DHC, "give little sense of the social context within which we work" (May 11, 1999). He highlighted, for example, the significance of the 'feeder' primary school effect in influencing exam results. This points, he added, to the need to incorporate more 'value-added' measures into school assessment. In the 1999-2000 academic year Lee Valley was perceived to have underperformed (as compared with past years' performances) in the GCSE exams. According to the DHC, this resulted in a considerable amount of pressure being exerted on the staff. A period of intensification ensued which was exacerbated by the advent of new 'raising standards' initiatives. At this time, I made a number of observations about the constant 'busyness' of staff, noting that they always seemed preoccupied with some task and had little time to relax. As a case in point, the staffroom appeared virtually empty - even at break-times. A number of staff also commented that their workload had intensified and that they were simply tired in the job (April 29, 1999). Pupils, too, appeared fatigued. As the DHC noted:

---

[107] The reader may recall from chapter Five that the Deputy Head for Curriculum was my main source of contact in the school. It was he who arranged for research access and who assisted in the selection of the research sample group. Consequently, my meetings and conversations with him constitute the main source of 'lived' cultural accounts given here.

"Lots of staff have said to me how tired and stressed last year's and this year's Year 11 pupils look" (June 16, 1999).

There was a sense too that, at times, the proliferation of new initiatives felt like 'add-ons' to teachers' existing job demands. The mentoring scheme, for example, required that teachers meet pupils not only in the classroom and/or in tutorial time, but also at other intervals in the working day. Often this meant that teachers needed to create space in an already crammed schedule. In the case of the DHC, for example, it was not unusual for him to meet pupils during his (and their) lunchtime recesses. Such problems tended to be overlooked, however, in the smooth planning and presentation stages of policy. In the last Ofsted report, for example, the school's mentoring system was regarded as exemplary. There was little sense of evaluation too from the school's point of view, despite the realisation that this initiative can be problematic in practice. This may have a lot to do with existing time constraints and the resultant lack of opportunity for 'reflexivity' in the job. In particular, the sheer expanse of 'raising standards' initiatives negates against a coherent assessment of change. As the DHC put it:

"It's hard to stand back to find out exactly what's going on - I've got initiatives coming at me from all sides. It would be nice to get a clear picture of events and an overall assessment of the effects of this 'raising standards' agenda on teachers" (May 11, 1999).

This section describes some aspects of the school's 'lived' cultural response to the 'raising standards' agenda. Its purpose is to show that while an 'official' response

continues to be promoted, this often appears at variance with a more realistic view of events. In particular, a number of problematic features may be shown to exist as 'raising standards' initiatives are implemented in practice. The forthcoming chapters develop from this insight to extrapolate (from a wide range of teachers' perspectives) a more detailed account of this claim. The following section now introduces those teachers who form the basis of this investigation.

Section Four: Teachers' views of 'raising standards' - an initial response

In many ways, this section serves as a follow-on from the previous one. However, in keeping with this study's focus, the analysis presented here deals exclusively with teachers' perceptions of events. Specifically, the perceptions of fourteen teachers are examined with a view to exploring: the meaning they attach to 'standards'; their value perspectives on the 'raising standards' agenda; their strategic response to promoting this agenda in the school and the classroom and; the impact of certain 'raising standards' initiatives on their teaching and on their pupils' development. A case study questionnaire is utilised here for this investigation (see Appendix II). While such a survey cannot hope to provide a comprehensive account of teachers' perceptions of events (due largely to the methodological limitations of the questionnaire as a research tool), it nevertheless illuminates teachers' *initial* responses to the 'raising standards' agenda. This, in turn, provides an important preliminary profile of the research participants and contributes to a more in-depth enquiry into the main research question which uses semi-structured interview schedules (see forthcoming chapters). The questionnaire survey (initiated on April 20, 1999) was administered to the following group of teachers (as outlined in chapter Five): the Headteacher; the DHC; the Heads

of Maths, English, Science and History; the Heads of Years 8/9 and 10/11 and; subject teachers of English, languages, PE, science, special needs, and maths [in total fourteen respondents – see Appendix VI for further details on this sample group]. Subsequent discussions are now directed to their questionnaire responses.

The first survey question refers to information about the school's ethos and policy response to the 'raising standards' agenda. Here, respondents were given eleven statements and were asked to indicate (without additional comment) the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with these (see Appendix II). It was found that *all* teachers in the research group either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements: In Lee Valley School *teachers have high expectations of pupil achievement*, *teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour*, and *a main aim of the 'raising standards' focus is to achieve good academic results*. Other statements produced different responses. In relation to five of these, the following results were recorded (see table 4 below):

Table 4: Teachers' views of the school's response to 'raising standards'

Statement	Response in Numbers					
	S. Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	S. Agree	Total
The majority of teachers engage in whole class teaching	-	-	5	7	2	14
Pupils play an active part in the life of the school	-	-	1	9	4	14
Most staff understand the school's aim in 'raising standards'	-	-	2	6	6	14
Most staff agree with the school's aim in 'raising standards'	-	-	4	7	3	14
Most staff have a shared sense of aim in developing initiatives	-	-	4	8	2	14

While the majority of teachers are shown to positively endorse the school's response to the 'raising standards' agenda, there does seem to be some uncertainty amongst them. This may be explained by the fact that, as a group, teachers are largely unaware of the impact of change on each other's practice. One must be mindful, too, that the change process is intensive and relatively current and, thus, it remains difficult for teachers to establish a firm understanding of its impact on school culture.

Some teachers did express their disagreement with some statements. The English teacher, for example, disagreed with the statement that *there is a strong focus on 'raising standards' in the school.* Two others (the English teacher and the Deputy SENCO/Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator) objected to the statement that *academic attainment is high in Lee Valley*, and a further two (the English teacher and Head of Maths) disagreed with the statement that *staff are involved in developing policy initiatives aimed at 'raising standards'.* In addition, the languages and maths teachers stated that they did not know whether staff had been involved in the development of 'raising standards' initiatives. Aside from these cases, all teachers once more either agreed or strongly agreed with the above statements.

Question two then asked teachers to indicate their support (or otherwise) for the two statements: *I do actively promote the 'raising standards' agenda in my school* and *I do actively promote the 'raising standards' agenda in the classroom.* Regarding the first of these, all teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with this except for both the English and Maths teachers. Later they divulged that this was because they did not

feel part of the school planning process. All teachers, however, overwhelmingly supported the second statement (seven 'strongly agree' tallies were recorded). Quite clearly they had identified their own work in the classroom as a significant contributory factor to 'raising standards' in the school.

At the outset of the survey, I had deliberately avoided defining the meaning of 'standards'. This was to allow the respondents the opportunity to give their own interpretation of the term. Question three thus asked: *briefly, what do educational 'standards' mean to you?* A number of different definitions emerged. For the Headteacher, for example, 'standards' meant "enhancing academic performance and the concept of responsibility for one's own outcomes". This definition was broadly supported by the Heads of Science and Maths, though the latter was careful to add that this interpretation was very much vogue within the present educational climate. A second interpretation promoted by the Head of Year 10/11 and the Deputy SENCO emphasised that 'standards' should be as much about the social development of pupils as it is about their academic progress. In the case of the Head of Year, this was because he saw the pastoral side of his job in equal importance to his role as a subject teacher. For the Deputy SENCO she explained that working with special educational needs pupils gave her a sense of perspective on what 'standards' meant - hence, she frequently held the social development aspect of the job in higher importance. A third meaning for 'standards' incorporated the academic, non-academic, and moral development of pupils. Thus, for the Head of English 'standards' involved:

> *"Academic achievement measured against national criteria yardsticks (egs Key Stage 3, GCSE, A Level), non-tested achievements (egs pupils' active interest in things we, as teachers, value such as independent reading,*

intellectual curiosity, participation in lessons), and standards of courtesy, appearance, regard for others".

This interpretation was broadly supported by the PE and science teachers. A fourth definition centred on pupils achieving their 'potential' and having 'high expectations' to fulfil this goal. The DHC, Head of History, Head of Year 8/9, and the languages teacher widely supported this position. Finally, there were those (notably, the English and maths teachers) who openly confessed to having no clear understanding of the term. Considering the wide variety of interpretations, perhaps this was the clearest message on offer.

Because of this confusion over the meaning of 'standards', it was important to focus the respondents' attention to a more 'official' definition. To this effect, question four listed a number of 'authoritative' policy initiatives which were directly aimed at 'raising standards' in schools (see Appendix II). Respondents were invited to indicate which ones had been (or were about to be) adopted by Lee Valley. They were also asked to add to this list if they so wished. This meant that participants would be commenting upon the same 'standards' phenomenon, while at the same time critiquing its value position using their own *meaning construction*. In response to this question, no two participants gave the same catalogue of 'raising standards' initiatives which were currently being adopted by the school. While the Headteacher indicated that all the initiatives listed were actively pursued by Lee Valley, this view was not shared by others. Many teachers failed to recognise a number of initiatives which constituted common school practice. Indeed, one Head of Department left out as many as eight (out of a total of twenty) initiatives on the list. In response to the request to catalogue additional initiatives which were being pursued by the school, the Headteacher

mentioned the IIP scheme, the HRS project and the programme for maintaining Specialist School Status. Some other teachers mentioned initiatives such as the 'borderline C' policy and the Peer Observation scheme. Of the remainder of the responses, however, six teachers declined to mention any policy initiative. Such recordings appear to indicate then that, while the 'raising standards' agenda is brimming with policy initiatives, it remains difficult for teachers to identify (let alone become involved) with the changing pace of reform in their school.

In order to get some sense of teachers' institutional responsibility to the 'raising standards' agenda, question five asked: *How do you promote the 'raising standards' agenda in the school?* The Headteacher, ever-mindful of his high profile position, commented that he was an active participant in the mentoring scheme; he organised the target-setting culture of the school (especially in relation to whole school and departmental planning); he ensured an adequate school structure to respond effectively to initiatives and to promote development; he provided up-to-date educational research for the staff and; he conducted annual staff reviews (individually, with teaching and non-teaching personnel). In relation to the other responses to this question, it became clear that teachers identified their contribution to 'raising standards' in the school with their own relative role position therein. Thus, the DHC believed he was contributing to 'raising standards' by virtue of his role responsibilities as Staff Development planner, NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher) instructor, and TCI (Technology College Initiative) and IIP co-ordinator. Likewise, the English teacher saw her role of literacy co-ordinator as instrumental for improving 'standards' in the school, as did the Deputy SENCO who wished to raise awareness for special educational needs. In this way,

there was a widespread individualised response to the question of organisational responsibility to the 'raising standards' agenda.

Question six was put to the respondents in much the same way as question four. A list of 'raising standards' initiatives were set out again, but this time they were directed more towards the *classroom* (see Appendix II). While these may have been validly seen as *school* initiatives, it was deemed useful to make the distinction for the purpose of exploring teachers' strategies for 'raising standards' in the classroom. It was thus recognised that respondents may feel that they have both a school *and* a classroom role in promoting the 'raising standards' agenda[108]. As in question four, no two teachers gave the same account of initiatives currently being adopted by the school. In addition, eight teachers declined to add any other initiative to the list. Of those that did, the PE teacher mentioned 'sports colours awards' (which was intrinsic to her department), and the Head of Maths likewise mentioned his own departmental schemes including the MEP (Maths Enrichment Programme) and the CAME (Cognitive Acceleration in Maths Education) project. Such recordings appear to indicate that the 'raising standards' agenda is frequently 'localised' at the departmental level. Once more, this constitutes a type of individualised response to the question of organisational responsibility.

Question seven then asked how each respondent promotes 'raising standards' in the classroom. Two teachers (of science and special educational needs) made no distinction between their school and classroom roles in promoting 'raising standards'. The Headteacher, too, saw his classroom response as a direct extension of his school

---

[108] This is a useful distinction to make particularly in relation to those teachers who exercise 'extra' managerial duties.

role. However, he did comment on the supplementary significance of classroom visits and lesson observations. The DHC, too, mentioned classroom observation in conjunction with the staff appraisal scheme and the support programmes for NQTs and PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) students. He also noted his responsibilities in monitoring homework, promoting discussions at curriculum meetings, and analysing exam results. Indeed, the analysis of exam results was mentioned by five other participants as a strategic response to 'raising standards' in the classroom. Other strategies mentioned included: tests, merit awards, classroom displays of good practice, pupil movement between sets, and the promotion of good discipline. Interestingly, the English teacher mentioned that her approach to 'raising standards' in the classroom was not necessarily strategic but, instead, emanated from a personal sense of commitment to teaching:

> *"I promote 'raising standards' in the classroom by doing my job to the best of my ability - this is not based on my desire to fulfill an agenda, but to teach each child to the highest level possible".*

This teacher reminds us that 'raising standards' is an intrinsic part of teaching, and one which cannot be reduced to some strategic delivery. Moreover, the pursuit of 'raising standards' conceives the very essence of what a teacher does and who he/she is as a person and professional. Consequently, as later chapters will attest, a critique of the 'raising standards' agenda is inextricably bound up with questions of pedagogical 'effectiveness' and, in particular, with how the 'self' adjusts to 'official' modes of practice.

In question eight respondents were asked to express an opinion on the assertion that: *the pursuit of 'raising standards' is an important aspect of teaching.* Thirteen of the

fourteen participants supported this in principle[109]. The fact that only three individuals (the Headteacher, DHC, and the PE teacher) 'strongly agreed' with it, however, does suggest that respondents were cautious about embracing this argument fully. Perhaps they were conscious of the political association of 'raising standards' with the plethora of initiatives (mentioned in questions four and six) that continue to impact upon school culture. Question eight wished to probe teachers' responses further regarding their appraisal of this impact. The results of this investigation are now given in table 5 below.

Table 5: Exploring teachers' initial views on the practical impact of the 'raising standards' focus

Statement	Response in Numbers						
	S. Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	S. Agree	No Response	Total
Policy initiatives have raised the profile of 'standards' in my school	-	1	1	11	1	-	14
This focus on 'raising standards' leads to improvements in pupil learning	-	-	2	9	3	-	14
Classroom teaching is positively influenced by the focus on 'raising standards'	-	-	3	10	1	-	14
There is considerable pressure on pupils to achieve higher 'standards'	-	-	-	8	6	-	14
Within the contemporary context, effective teaching means getting high results	1	2	1	2	6	2	14

With respect to the statement *policy initiatives have raised the profile of 'standards' in my school*, the English teacher disagreed with it on the grounds (as question one and later interviews testify) that these initiatives do not focus on the improvement of

[109] The Deputy SENCO indicated that she 'did not know' whether such a statement was agreeable or not. I believe that this value position had a lot to do with her repeated critique of the *contemporary* stress on academic results.

'standards' (as interpreted by her). The Head of Maths, who indicated a 'don't know' count in relation to this claim, commented to me later that it was too early to predict the real impact of all these initiatives. Concerning the statement *this focus on 'raising standards' leads to improvements in pupil learning*, the vast majority of teachers supported its value position[110]. It was noted that the Head of Year 10/11 and the maths teacher expressed their uncertainty about this statement. A similar pattern came into view in relation to comments about the statement: *classroom teaching is positively influenced by the focus on 'standards' in my school*. Among the teachers who registered 'don't know' counts included the Head of Year 10/11 and the English and maths teachers[111]. *All* teachers, though, overwhelmingly supported the statement: *there is considerable pressure on pupils to achieve higher standards*. As the above table indicates, six 'strongly agree' and eight 'agree' counts were registered.

Perhaps the most interesting responses were recorded concerning the statement: *within the contemporary context, effective teaching means getting high results*. Here, the maths teacher strongly disagreed with this claim. Later she commented to me that this was because she herself felt that this was not how teaching should be perceived. This personalised response may also explain why the languages and Deputy SENCO disagreed with this statement. While the English teacher felt uncertain about its claim, two 'no response' counts were registered by the Head of Science and the science teacher. Exactly why they did not register a response was uncertain at the time, but

---

[110] This majority position, however, would later be questioned in interviews. Here, it emerged that real concerns existed amongst teachers regarding the type of learning being fostered, and the degree to which 'official' strategies for 'raising standards' are incorporated into classroom practice.

[111] Certainly, these three individuals appeared to have some considered concerns about the 'assertive' statements presented to them i.e. in responding, they seem to have engaged in a measured critique of the 'positive' claims supplied.

later they divulged that they both felt that this question was politically 'sensitive'[112]. With respect to the rest of the responses, six 'strongly agree' and two 'agree' counts were recorded. The teachers who made these judgements seemed very aware of the contemporary stress on 'teacher effectiveness' and, in particular, the advent of PRP proposals.

In order to explore the fundamental impact of the 'raising standards' agenda on individuals' work, question nine read: *Has the focus on 'raising standards' significantly influenced your job? Briefly explain your response*. Ten respondents replied that their jobs had been significantly influenced. Two individuals (the English and languages teachers) answered 'no', explaining that their classroom approach had remained significantly unchanged. Specifically, they demonstrated that the pursuit of 'raising standards' was compatible with their own personal ideals in the job. As the languages teacher put it:

> *"My expectations of pupils and my lesson objectives have not changed in any way - if I didn't wish to constantly maintain and strive for high 'standards', I wouldn't stay in teaching".*

The PE and maths teachers both registered an 'unsure' count with regards to this statement. In the case of the former, she felt that some aspects of the job had changed but, in a more fundamental way, her approach to classroom teaching remained constant:

---

[112] The science department at the time of research was under considerable pressure to improve its results at Key Stages 3 and 4.

"Yes the job has changed in relation to the need for more assessing and monitoring of pupil achievement, but I hope that I have always strived to improve 'standards' within my teaching".

The maths teacher had no other experiences to draw upon (having just recently qualified) and thus she felt that she couldn't adequately assess the impact of 'new' changes to her job. In relation to the other teachers, the focus on 'raising standards' was deemed to have significantly influenced what they did. The Headteacher, for example, felt that his job profile had increased and that there was a lot more emphasis now on raising funds for the school[113]. As many as seven teachers talked about the constant need presently to analyse results and monitor the performances of their pupils. The most illuminating account of them all, however, pertains to comments made by the DHC:

"I find the level of stress has risen as we try to do more with often little of any extra resources. I teach to the syllabus and there is no time now for full exploration of my subject with pupils. I complete too many pieces of paper as I seek to account for the 'success' and the 'efficiency' of what we do. My agendas for meetings are too 'heavy' and crowded. I am better at analysing pupil performances but I spend too much time worrying about how the school compares with others both locally and nationally".

This comprehensive and frank response is, I believe, a reflection of the close relationship we had built up throughout the course of the research. It also indicates a significant departure from an 'official' response to questions.

The final question of this questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first asked respondents to comment on the statement: *the focus on 'raising standards' is a welcome initiative*. Eleven teachers supported this claim in principle commenting generally on the benefits of any attempts to raise 'standards' in schools. However, some of these respondents supplemented their replies with conditional terms. Thus, the languages teacher would support the focus on 'raising standards' if it was aimed at the "betterment of pupils". Likewise, the Head of English agreed with 'raising standards' in principle but was wary of the form which this might take in schools. Further, the Head of Year 10/11 wanted to endorse a model which respected the development of the 'whole person'. The DHC expressed his uncertainty about the statement, registering a 'don't know' count. Specifically, he pointed out that the focus on 'raising standards' was not something 'new'. Schools, he argued, had always been in the business of trying to improve. He added, however, that the current drive to raise 'standards' had "produced a lot of anxiety and serious overload in staff". Such sentiments appear to resonate with the Deputy SENCO and maths teacher who both disagreed with the statement presented to them. The former was concerned that pupils may "feel inadequate" if they are unable to achieve high 'standards'. The latter believed that the focus on 'raising standards' had negative implications for the profession. As she put it:

> *"Most teachers I know work extremely hard and do all they can to get the best out of pupils. The extra pressure is unnecessary and hints that teachers are currently not doing their job properly".*

---

[113] Specifically, the Headteacher believed that raising funds for the school represented a valuable task in the pursuit of 'raising standards'. He pointed to new facilities (such as the Technology and Arts

The final part of question ten then asked: *do you have any concerns about the 'raising standards' initiative*? Three respondents (the Head of History, Head of Year 10/11 and the science teacher) did not register a comment. This highlighted the limitations of the questionnaire survey as a research instrument and, in particular, pointed to the need for a more in-depth and personalised research approach (such as the use of interviews). The remainder of the responses, however, did give a significant insight into teachers' concerns. The Headteacher, for example, spoke of the anxiety that education and teaching appeared too narrowly focused towards the 'academic'. Education was more than just achieving high academic results, as the DHC pointed out. Whilst teachers "are professionals who welcome checks on them", he added "they need to be allowed to continue to use their own professional development of skills and knowledge to achieve improvement in the best way they can". The constant change process (which is "politically driven") did not help matters, producing instead "instability and uncertainty". The English teacher expressed her concern that teachers and pupils were overlooked by a 'raising standards' focus on separate initiatives. The Deputy SENCO picked up on this point by choosing one such initiative (the PRP issue) which she believed would adversely affect both groups. Further, the languages teacher highlighted the concern that the quality of lessons and levels of pupil enjoyment were being undermined by a narrowly focused academic agenda. From the pupils' perspective, the alienation of those who underperform in exams was an anxiety felt by both the HoY 8/9[114] and the Head of English. From the teachers' perspective, the Head of Science indicated that the intensification of their labour was a real concern (particularly in relation to increased levels of bureaucracy and monitoring and

---

Centres) as evidence of this 'important association'.

analysing procedures). The adverse effects of the 'raising standards' focus on teachers' sense of well-being, too, was noted by the Head of English:

> *"The 'raising standards' focus can at times be seen as a statistical obsession, overshadowing social/human factors that affect performance. It can create a sense of anxiety/oppression in staff".*

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with examining the case study school's response to the 'raising standards' agenda. It began by exploring some of the features of Lee Valley School. These features serve to locate the organisation within a unique social and cultural context. Section Two then examined how Lee Valley's support for the 'raising standards' agenda is secured through the promotion of 'public' and 'internal' texts. It is claimed here that the manner in which respondents think about, and act upon the 'raising standards' agenda is significantly influenced by the substance of these documents. Of course it is accepted that teachers' response to the 'raising standards' agenda can never be pre-determined. Section Three highlighted this fact by showing how 'official' perceptions may be at variance with real-life events. However, despite some evidence of relative autonomy, school cultural practice was shown to be continually constrained by pervasive 'external' pressures.

Section Four introduced this study's research sample group. Here, fourteen teachers proffered their 'initial' response to the 'raising standards' agenda. The accounts presented here are subjective in nature and reflect the particular traits of each

---

[114] The term **HoY 8/9** is used throughout the study to highlight the fact that over the course of this

individual, including: their role position in the school, their level of teaching experience and/or political awareness, as well as their personal, cultural, and gender positionings. In the main, most of the questionnaire results denote a 'positive' response to the 'raising standards' agenda. However, there are strong indications that numerous concerns remain regarding its practical effects in school. These concerns emerge as teachers move beyond an 'official' support for this agenda and engage in a more considered critique of its claims. The following chapters attempt to promote this sense of teacher 'reflexivity' using semi-structured interview techniques. In this way, the research study proceeds to establish a more comprehensive explanation of teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda. Specifically, the forthcoming chapters are concerned with exploring teachers' perceptions of changes to their work culture. To this effect, chapter Seven now addresses the real impact of the intensification process.

---

research, the same pastoral Head of Year was successively responsible to pupils in Years 8 and 9.

Chapter Seven: The Intensity of the 'Raising Standards' Agenda and its Impact on Teachers

"..any understanding of teaching will be severely limited unless it incorporates an understanding of how teachers themselves make sense of what they do: how they construe and evaluate their own teaching, how they make judgements, and why, in their own understanding, they choose to act in particular ways in specific circumstances to achieve their success" (Brown and McIntyre: 1993, p1).

Introduction

'Raising standards' is proffered by those in power as the rationale for 'progressive' change. The resultant transformations in teachers' work are significant. As indicated in Chapter Four, for example, teachers' work culture is now subject to greater levels of intensification. By this, there is increased pressure to do more work with the same amount of resources formerly allocated in the job. To many educational commentators this phenomenon is immediately recognisable as a daily fact of school life. There may be a sense among this group, however, that because intensification is visible and because various causal effects on teachers have been documented, the verification and explication of this process appear somewhat complete. To make this assumption is, I feel, foolhardy for three specific reasons. Firstly, in relation to the changing configurations of global, economic and political contexts, it is clear that *intensification* cannot be representative of a static process. Its impact on teachers' work at any one time in any particular setting will vary. Secondly, the intensity and extent of its impact on teachers as a group still remains uncertain. In particular, the meanings which

teachers themselves attach to this process (and their views of its impact on their daily working lives) signifies an under-developed source of enquiry. Thirdly, the manner in which the intensification process impacts upon other aspects of teachers' work (such as their sense of professionalism and aspects of their personal/professional identity) remains unclear. For example, as Chapter Four argues, while intensification may contribute significantly to a 'deskilling' process, it needn't be seen as either a sufficient or definitive condition for this effect. Chapter Eight develops this issue further.

Given the above points, then, the purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it sets out to provide a decriptive account of the cultural impact of intensification on teachers in the case study school. Here, the pursuit of 'raising standards' is viewed as the principal contributor to the intensification process. Of course, other factors too need to be considered when assessing the impact on teachers - most notably, the size of the case study school, its relative positioning in the market (including levels of expectation) and the rigorous demands of contemporary teaching. The particular characteristics of the teachers within our research sample group, also, including their personal/professional attitudes to the job and their levels of experience, will have a significant bearing on this investigation. These features are referred to again in the conclusion section of this chapter. The second primary purpose of this chapter is to provide the opportunity for the teacher sample group to give their own sense of meaning to this intensification process and to specifically provide individual accounts of its impact on their daily working lives. This purpose is in keeping with our main research aim of examining teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda. Moreover, as the quote at the outset of this chapter reveals, this serves to contribute to a greater understanding of the teaching act itself.

The empirical data used to advance this respective investigation is drawn from two interviews conducted with each of the fourteen teachers in our research sample group (see Appendices III and IV)[115]. Here, three main categories are generated (sections One-Three) which further illuminate the theoretical discussions presented in Chapter Four. In addition, these categories are shown to proffer fresh insight into the impact of intensification on teachers. Section One now highlights the first of these categories and, in doing so, locates a significant source of intensification on teachers as that which derives from the workload demands of the 'raising standards' agenda.

Section One: The workload demands of the 'raising standards' agenda

The reconstruction of the education system in England and Wales, especially over the past two decades, has been profound. In particular, the pursuit of 'raising standards', which envelops a managerialist and politicised agenda (see chapter Three), has legitimated a ubiquitous wave of change ranging from provisions for: a reorganisation of school structure and management; greater accountability mechanisms; devolved responsibility to and greater competition between schools as well as; the establishment of a 'new professional' culture. Schools, therefore, are compelled to increasingly look outward for administrative and cultural direction. This dependency on 'external' conditions is fully recognised by teachers in our case study school. As the Head of Year 8/9 put it: "a lot of what we do is statutory requirements - the government puts

[115] The reader will recall from chapter Five that the interviews took place over different times of the academic year i.e. interview one was conducted during the week beginning June 28th, 1999 and interview two during the week beginning January 24th, 2000.

pressure on the school to respond.." (Int two, q 1)[116]. The DHC, too, acknowledged the school's limited influence on 'official' policy arrangements:

> *"Okay the Head and the staff can discuss policies and we can put our own slant on them - but only to a limited degree - because if there is a certain emphasis and definition on policy which is being handed down, you can't take that out"* (Int two, q 5).

Effectively, then, change is perceived as something that is largely imposed. This, in itself, may not cause too many objections among some respondents and, indeed, the focus on 'raising standards' may be something that is welcomed (at least in principle). However, while this value-system may have been broadly held by the Headteacher and the DHC, for example, a number of reform features were still considered to be significantly objectionable[117]. One such concern involved their critique of the actual *pace of change*:

- *"I'm not against the direction of a lot of the changes, I just think that the pace is excessive - I don't think this government has fully appreciated the impact of those changes"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 7)
- *"I think I'm happy with most changes. I suppose what I'm saying is that it's all a bit quick"* (DHC: Int two, q 7)[118]

---

[116] NB: the following notation is given throughout the course of these chapters: Int = Interview, q = question. These serve to match the respondent's quote with the particular interview (either Int one or Int two) and the specific question asked therein. Accordingly, the reader may wish to consult Appendices III and IV to locate all quotes within their respective interview schedules.

[117] Throughout the interview schedules, a number of *contradictory* responses were recorded. In this case, while the Headteacher and the DHC were seen to positively support the 'raising standards' agenda (at least in principle), they were also shown to have a number of considered concerns about its effects in school. Further examples of contradictory responses are given in forthcoming discussions (see especially chapters Eight and Nine).

[118] In light of these quotes we may well ask ourselves whether we should welcome the Prime Minister's comments that a second term in office will bring with it "a quickening of the pace of reform" (Labour Party Conference: September 26, 2000).

In addition to these comments, the Headteacher lamented the fact that teaching was under constant scrutiny, while the DHC believed that change would have been more constructive had it have been developed 'from within' the profession. To many of the other respondents, this concern about the intense pace of reform was shared. The Deputy SENCO, for example, in her capacity as supervisor to the literacy scheme, spoke about the restricted time (one INSET morning session) she had available to disseminate information to the rest of the staff. The PE teacher, too, commented about the need to "spread 'raising standards' policies over a longer period of time" (Int two, q 8). This was a direct response to the concern that, presently, she believed there were too many initiatives at work in the school.

This idea of *initiative overload* was mentioned by numerous respondents. The 'progressive' nature of the school was highlighted as a significant factor of influence in this respect[119]. As the English teacher put it, "there's always something going on, 'new this, new that'" (Int two, q 1). The school, she added, always seemed to be "jumping on the bandwagon of change" (Int one, q 2). Her sentiments were supported by the maths teacher:

> *"The impression I get is that the school is looking to become a model for other schools. Everything we do - we do High Reliability, we do various maths schemes, we are a technology college - we look towards becoming a model centre"* (Int one, q 3).

---

[119] It should be noted here that, just like at the macro-level, at institutional level a number of *individuals* (most notably, the Headteacher and his SMT) are responsible for driving a process of change. Sometimes, these individuals may (as in the case of the HRS project) act not just in accordance with government requirements but also in line with some form of self-imposed choice.

Meetings were frequently perceived to be cluttered with new initiatives which demanded immediate attention by staff. These initiatives were often handed down through committee structures, with little or no time allocated for collective discussions by other staff. The resultant frustration on the part of those teachers was noticeable:

> *"When the minutes come out you can hear people saying 'oh here we go, they're going to implement this now' [..] I think people feel 'hang on, where did that come from?'"* (Languages teacher: Int two, q 5).

Some respondents were wary of the effects of the new job demands on their existing commitments:

- *"There are a number of things I have had to try to fit into my job [..] there's always this danger that you do a lot of things superficially rather than do a small amount of things efficiently"* (English HoD: Int one, q 4)
- *"There is a danger of spreading things too thin - a river fifty miles wide and half an inch deep, or half a mile wide and a mile deep?"* (History HoD: Int two, q 5)

This notion of initiative overload also meant that a feeling of *separateness* was experienced by staff in relation to new job demands. By this, most teachers felt a sense of ownership over only a few initiatives - these were mainly ones which they were personally involved in[120]. As regards the 'other' initiatives, there was a mixed reaction concerning their impact on practice. To a minority of teachers, such initiatives were embraced and (where appropriate) inculcated into their practice; to others, they carried

[120] This has a number of implications for how these teachers perceive their own professional identity and how they develop new skills within the job (see chapter Eight).

out what was required of them without necessarily (and wholly) assimilating new 'value-systems' while; to others still, such initiatives had only a 'peripheral effect' on their practice (see next chapter). This latter position was evident (at least to some degree) in the majority of cases. This manifested itself most clearly in teachers' lack of awareness of all the 'raising standards' initiatives currently being pursued by the school (as outlined in chapter Six). To those respondents, too, it was strongly felt that 'there was only so much they could do' - thus, despite their best intentions they felt it was impossible to be associated with all the initiatives.

The sheer mass of 'raising standards' initiatives highlights the perceived need for a systems-based approach to change which ultimately reinforces the managerialist requirement for 'mini leaders' to manage their operation (see next chapter). Taken as a whole, however, all these initiatives appear to be as fragmentary as they are corporate in character. This is due to the fact that many 'raising standards' initiatives vie for both the immediate attention of staff (as highlighted) and the allocation of auxiliary resources. Thus, while they all are ultimately aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning (at least 'officially'), they may also (paradoxically) be shown to act in competition with one another. Consequently, some initiatives may be deemed to be more important (and this is not necessarily a value judgement) than others at any one time in the school year. In preparing for inspection, for example, the school may be firmly focused on the *representation* of good practice (see chapter Nine) rather than its *development*. Given the existing demands in the job, such a focus on Ofsted inspections often deflects attention away from other initiatives which are also aimed at 'raising standards':

- *"We've been through an Ofsted inspection some eighteen months ago. We did very well, approached it professionally, but it affects achievement. We took our eye off the ball while preparing for it"* (Headteacher: Int one, q 3)
- *"With Ofsted it was amazing.. we started about nine months before they came in and towards the end it was all about photocopying books, reports and paperwork"* (PE teacher: Int one, q 1)

The *competitive nature* of 'raising standards' initiatives meant that some (often, valuable) tasks became 'frozen out', to use the words of the DHC. Routine duties (such as the DHC's time-table cover and pastoral care work), for example, were seen as necessary but "taken for granted" responsibilities (DHC: Int one, q 4). Furthermore, these routine duties were shown to be competing (for resources and attention) with other 'more important' tasks associated with improving academic performance (such as analysing and monitoring exam results). The HoY 10/11[121], for example, believed that discipline tasks lay "in the shadow of expectations of 'success' and target-setting" (Int two, q 7). This *spatial tension* in teachers' work was felt elsewhere. The science teacher mentioned that the school was trying to organise a programme for sharing good practice but that this tended "to be sidelined a bit" (Int one, q 4). Others, pointing once more to the adage that 'there was only so much they could do', believed that some aspects of the job suffered because of a certain (more accurately, academic) focus on 'raising standards':

- *"I think the law of diminishing returns can set in - you can pump more and more fertiliser on the same patch of land but you can't expect it to be more*

[121] The term **HoY 10/11** is used throughout the study to highlight the fact that over the course of this research, the same pastoral Head of Year was successively responsible to pupils in Years 10 and 11.

fruitful [..] it's like robbing Peter to pay Paul - you might get better academic results but nobody runs clubs" (HoD History: Int two, q 1)

- *"Maybe other things get cut elsewhere - things that teachers might have done, for example the extra-curricular events cut as teachers analyse their results and the time required to do this increases"* (HoD English: Int two, q 1)

The plethora of work demands brought about by the pursuit of 'raising standards' initiatives could thus only be managed by concentrating on a few at any one time[122]. Thus, a sort of *stop-start* culture emerged in relation to their implementation. This idea was neatly captured firstly by the DHC's comments about the IIP scheme and, secondly, by the English teacher's comments about Ofsted:

- *"We're coming up to re-inspection on IIP and I haven't even got more than a couple of minutes on the agendas of staff and SMT meetings to discuss it [..] I'm supposed to be writing down how we've achieved what we set out to achieve in the IIP - that's what we're about because investing in people is central to everything. But it isn't getting the attention and if we get awarded it again it would be a miracle because you have to keep going at it - you can't just sit back and say 'right we've got that'.."* (DHC: Int one, q 4)

- *"I'm not sure how much impact Ofsted has on the school apart from causing a lot of panic when they get here only to be forgotten until they come back again"* (English teacher: Int 1, q 8)

---

[122] The 'novelty factor' was significant here too. By this, the school tended to concentrate on new policy developments which demanded their immediate attention. 'Older' initiatives, which did not exhibit the same sense of immediacy, were assumed to be operating 'as normal'.

This 'stop-start' culture meant that the intensification process was more focused at different periods of the school year. Further, there was little opportunity for teachers to plan ahead and to take stock of new job demands since the initiatives themselves appeared to change throughout their course. One clear example of this manifested itself in the form of teacher appraisal proposals. Originally, the school had planned a peer observation scheme which was essentially 'non-threatening' and functioned with a large input from the teachers themselves. This appraisal model was now under serious threat from the new stress on Performance Related Pay. The Headteacher expressed his considerable concern about this changing focus:

> *"I want to introduce teaching and learning style approaches in a positive sense but the government is turning it into a public relations event [..] I want to stay on the path and don't want to be knocked off by this thing called the Green Paper"* (Int one, q 1).

The Head of Year 8/9 expressed his concerns about the effects of this new focus on teachers' levels of stress in the job:

> *"If the appraisal scheme became too rigid or systematic, then I think that would add to everybody's stresses. It would be like being Ofsteded every day"* (Int one, q 8).

There were some concerns, too, that the amount of work invested by teachers into the old initiative phases might soon be regarded as redundant. The English HoD identified this anxiety in relation to his own (and his staff's) considerable efforts to prepare departmental schemes of work:

"In September 2000 they're anticipating that schemes of work for all subjects will be delivered to schools. So we are being asked to review them now - but it may well be something that will be handed down to us in a couple of years time which might make redundant the work that people may well have achieved" (Int one, q 1).

This highlights that, while the change process itself is subject to increasing 'authoritative' direction, the intensification of teachers' work is not only sustained but is also reconstituted on a regular basis.

The administrative problems derived from the increased pace of change, initiative overload and immediate 'external' demands on the school are resolved (within a managerialist framework) by the adoption of 'systems' (see chapter Three). In line with 'new work order' principles (see Day et al: 2000, Smyth et al: 2000), for example, a more dispersed management system is now being promoted to designate increased levels of responsibility (to some teachers at least). As the English HoD put it:

> *"This is almost inevitable - because of so many pressures you've got to share out the jobs which means that more people (we hope) get involved in formulating and deciding what practical steps need to be taken to implement new schemes"* (Int two, q 5).

A certain *faith in systems* (a managerialist characteristic) is therefore espoused for the purposes of organisational efficiency and the more even distribution of workload. Paradoxically, however, this may entail delimiting staff autonomy and responsibility in a broad sense, as more management configurations are put in place which reinforce

existing hierarchical power structures in the school. In essence, within this systems-based approach the intensification problem is viewed upon almost exclusively in terms of a 'managerial solution':

> *"We have developed an ICT method for keeping the data, we've tried to speed up the input of data, we've tried to help staff by appointing senior people to support on the assessment side and on the professional development side to take away the pressure on staff a little. But there is only so much you can do - we are enlarging the senior management team (we've already increased it by two in this school) and we're looking at the government's new pay structure so that we can perhaps increase the levels of senior staff further"* (DHC: Int two, q 8).

The above quote highlights the DHC's concern to 'protect his staff' from the pressures and stresses of the job. While systems of managerial intervention may have a significant part to play in this mission, it is clear from the following discussions that, by itself, it is insufficient in alleviating conditions of intensification. Indeed, many of the following comments point to this strategy's capacity for exacerbating such problems. Certainly, as the proliferation of 'raising standards' demands introduces new responsibilities for some staff, this often means an increase in other teachers' workload levels:

> *"I think where it is hard is on those who are around me because I have to delegate [..] The paperwork is enormous and I am literally passing it out to those around me"* (Headteacher: Int one, q 9).

School organisation is thus increasingly geared towards overseeing a 'devolved' system of managerial responsibility. This means that individual staff responsible for particular 'raising standards' initiatives must justify their own role positions by supervising the workload levels of other staff. Ultimately, the proliferation of administrative duties ensues:

> *"I can see maybe one or two SMT members becoming 'the bureaucratic ticket' - they're just producing the stuff and it's just another tier of paper to fill in which justifies their position. However, with closer analysis this work could probably be rationalised. There ought to be an anti-committee in every major school like this whose job it is to override the other committees and literally look at everything they produce"* (History HoD: Int 2, q 5).

It was strongly felt by many respondents that the levels of administrative duties had indeed increased. This was true at the level of the classroom too:

- *"I certainly enjoy being in the classroom.. but sometimes things get in the way of that. The work is increasing, I have to say.."* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 10)
- *"The paperwork is horrendous - look at the state of my desk.."* (Deputy SENCO: Int one, q 4)

All teachers were conscious of supporting the 'raising standards' agenda in principle but, nevertheless, they felt that the *workload* was relentlessly high. In particular, they pointed to the counterproductive nature of constantly focusing on raising academic performance:

- *"I know that everybody in the faculty is really on board and well disposed to the idea of kids doing as well as possible. But it's impossible not to sense this feeling of 'here we go again'"* (English HoD: Int one, q 1)
- *"It's not that we don't agree with them in theory [..] Any initiative which is aimed at raising achievement is a good thing but, you know, it always seems to come back to this emphasis on exam results - you get loads and loads of work and you tend to say 'when is this going to end?'"* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 3)

Given the increase in administrative tasks and the relentless nature of the workload, teachers unsurprisingly found it hard to cope. Many spoke about the need to manage their time well during school hours. Despite intentions to stay "very focused for the day" (English teacher: Int one, q 9), it became the norm for teachers to work late after school and during holidays. This created a significant tension for one female teacher who had a young family and thus had to cope with working between two sites - the school and the home (Apple: 1986, Smyth et al: 2000). Extending their number of working hours, then, represented a significant teacher 'coping strategy' in dealing with workload problems (Lortie: 1975, Connell: 1985).

Teaching has long being considered a *stressful* occupation. Within the contemporary globalised context, teacher stress takes on a unique dimension as new job demands are endorsed under the banner of 'raising standards' (see chapter Four). In particular, the emphasis on 'teacher effectiveness' brings with it the assumption that teachers are individually responsible for the exam outcomes of their pupils. At the time of this research, one teacher (not in the sample group) had been singled out by the Head for

his 'poor exam results'. One HoD commented that the disciplinary procedures that followed had consequential effects for how *other* teachers perceived themselves in the job:

> *"My worry is the effect it's having on the other staff who hear about it and think 'that could be me if my results are bad'"* (Int one, q 6).

The stress assigned to this notion of 'teacher effectiveness' coupled with increased pressures in the job meant that teaching was now (more than ever) regarded as 'a difficult job' (DHC: Int two, q 8). The amount of absenteeism due to illness was significant in Lee Valley and the DHC had pointed to the LEA's concern for analysing the root causes of similar levels across a number of its schools. From a management's point of view (both at senior and middle levels) it was difficult to reconcile the perceived need to pressurise staff while at the same time look out for their welfare. As the English HoD put it:

> *"How can you try to get across the message that even better things are expected without it being counter-productive where people are feeling oppressed?"* (Int one, q 1).

From the pupils' perspective, it was widely believed that their levels of pressure and stress too had increased as a direct result of the focus on 'raising standards' in the school. The HoD (maths), for example, pointed to the amount of absenteeism in Year 11 as a significant factor of stress. The Deputy SENCO also commented about the pressure felt by these pupils:

"The stress levels for Year 11 were extraordinary. I had two or three who came back to school during the holiday times just to talk and have a good cry.. for God's sake they are examinations - it's not worth this" (Int one, q 7).

She later indicated that there was no counsellor in the school for these pupils to seek support and advice. The PE teacher added that pupils "needed a release" from the constant 'raising standards' message (Int one, q 2). The result of such an intensive drive for pupil improvement meant that many of the pupils (Year 11 were given particular reference) had become very 'serious' and 'tired' individuals:

- *"I felt that last year's Year 11s (I had two classes) were very serious young people. There were times when I looked up to start my lesson and they were absolutely flat as a pancake. They were worn out and they had just come from another member of staff who had been practising exam techniques with them. They're getting that six times a day and it's all too intensive for them. I think in time people will realise that"* (DHC: Int one, q 5)
- *"I felt that Year 11s were tired - we're killing some of them"* (Science HoD: Int one, q 7)
- *"I do actually think myself that the Easter revision course has got a lot to do with pupil stress levels - they gave up effectively a week of the two week holiday. I sort of followed that up and watched them all and I thought 'yeah, they do look strained and stressed - it's true'"* (Maths HoD: Int one, q 2)

Some teachers expressed their concern that the 'raising standards' agenda tended to alienate the very individuals it was designed to help in the first place. Here, conformity to management processes appeared to be sublimated at the expense of a more considered concern for the individual:

- *"On the one hand, yes qualifications is what we're about (the best GCSEs, the best A Levels), but as we drive forward we sometimes forget the individual pupil and the pressures on this individual which are now far greater"* (Headteacher: Int one, q 2)
- *"Sometimes I sit back and think 'I spend too much time assessing and ticking boxes than actually doing my job - that is, working with the kids themselves' [..] You don't talk about kids, you talk about the processes around them"* (PE teacher: Int one q 1, q 6)
- *"I think initiatives are done for the benefit of the school and how the school works - in a lot of cases the school focuses on their management and what we (as teachers) should be doing. The idea of relationship is taken away"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 2)

In particular, teachers had a strong vocational concern for those lower ability pupils who seemed isolated from the whole mission for higher grades. This concern was a reflection of the strong 'ethic of care' which they held in their job (Nias: 1989, Smyth et al: 2000). The Head of Year 8/9, for example, talked about "the large number of pupils at the bottom" who tended "to become disillusioned" at school (Int one, q 3). The Deputy SENCO and HoD (history) both said that the pervasive 'exam culture' in the school was inappropriate for these pupils. Further, the maths teacher expressed her profound guilt at not attending fully to the relative needs of pupils below the C/D grade threshold. She was certain that this lack of attention was strongly felt by those

lower ability pupils themselves[123]. Indeed, the English HoD pointed out that "because the school is so manifestly focusing on C/D pupils at GCSE", those pupils may become "even more retired and made to feel negative" (Int one, q 2).

Section Two: 'Raising Standards' as an instrument of accountability

As chapter Four highlights, there has been a significant increase in accountability demands on teachers' work in recent years (see also Blase: 1991, Apple and Jungck: 1992, A Hargreaves: 1994b). Teachers, for example, are much more accountable now for curriculum instruction in their classrooms and for professional development choices in the job (see chapter Eight). Further, as mentioned throughout this work, systems of bureaucratic control are now well established for assessing and monitoring classroom teachers' performance (such as appraisal and output measurement schemes). These accountability mechanisms cannot be separated from the political-economic, socio-cultural and technological context in which schools are globally or 'glocally' located (Smyth et al, 2000). Principally, from a managerialist perspective, such mechanisms are perceived to reflect *the current reality of schooling*[124]:

- *"The whole culture of accountability is widespread now - it's functioning at every level in society and there's no reason why teachers shouldn't play on the same field really"* (History HoD: Int one, q 1)

- *"I don't think we can get away from the point about education being viewed upon in terms of crude measurements, because it's almost as if*

---

[123] From a psychological perspective, Weiner (1983) notes that the teacher's perception of the pupil often forms the basis of the latter's self-perception. Moreover, the measure of a teacher's attention to a pupil is often adopted by the latter to rationalize reasons for his/her success or failure.

[124] According to Clarke and Newman (1997, p78), this belief in 'the way things are now' reflects "the most potent underpinning of managerialism" because it promotes the view that "there is no alternative" to the current mode of managerialist thinking.

society is demanding it. If we don't try and measure pupils' performances and how they progress, we just cannot face the issue that won't go away - and that is, the public and the government do want to know how we are measuring what we do. Like any organisation in industry I think we've got to face that" (DHC: Int two, q 1)

- *"If the outside judge us by C/D grades then it is right that we cope with this. This is part of the culture now"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 1)

In conjunction with the 'new conditions' of accountability, the English HoD, the Headteacher and the HoD (science) commented that school practice was being increasingly affected by the expansive expectations of parents and society[125]. The Deputy SENCO also pointed to the threat of litigation as a further motive for regulating practice. Understandably, then, as the science teacher pointed out, it was difficult for teachers to blame the SMT for directive measures which they too were ultimately held accountable for delivering.

The Headteacher believed that 'raising standards' initiatives had come to be assimilated over time as an integral part of school practice[126]:

"Whereas initiatives may ten years previously have been viewed upon as 'add-ons', I guess it is the case now that here [in Lee Valley] they have become integral" (Headteacher: Int one, q 1).

---

[125] In effect, these teachers believed that the school was, in many ways, replacing 'the home' in promoting 'responsible' societal values. The curriculum provision for sex and health education, civic/political instruction, and pupil mentoring may be proffered as evidence of this phenomenon.
[126] David Hargreaves (1995, p25) points out that: "today's cultural form created to solve an emergent problem often becomes tomorrow's taken-for-granted recipe for dealing with matters shorn of their novelty". The Headteacher's 'progressive' view of change (as outlined here) appears to mirror these philosophical sentiments.

In addition, it was thought that younger teachers were more accepting of these new changes to their work:

> *"We often forget that with younger teachers initiatives are not necessarily a problem - it's the older teachers (like myself) where there's an element of cynicism"* (Headteacher: Int one, q 1).

In this study, there was no evidence to suggest that younger teachers were more (or indeed, less) accepting of 'raising standards' reform than their more experienced and older colleagues. The above comments do illuminate, however, the firm belief (at least 'officially' on the part of the Headteacher) that 'raising standards' initiatives had become central to the teacher's job. While this claim is further explored in chapter Eight, it is clear that teachers felt a strong sense of *role accountability* in connection with these initiatives - particularly in relation to the intrinsic focus on academic achievement:

- *"Inevitably the interest is each year on academic achievement and those are the things you've got to be accountable for"* (HoY 8/9: Int one, q 6)
- *"I suppose the biggest change that is noticeable in what we do is the amount of target setting and the degree of accountability within these initiatives. Here, it probably has always been about performance and academic results"* (English teacher: Int one, q 3)
- *"HMIs, parents, headteachers are all interested in quantifiable things such as the academic, so we concentrate on that"* (History HoD: Int two, q 3)

The Headteacher's authority was seen as instrumental in endorsing this sense of role accountability[127]:

- *"Teachers are definitely under much more pressure and that's partly because the Head will actually look at certain results and say 'if there is something wrong with them let's go into it in a bit more detail and look at why that group didn't do very well and that one did' - and that's homing in on individual teachers"* (Maths HoD: Int one, q 6)
- *"The Head nudges you constantly [..] he won't just say it once a year, the next time you're in [his office] discussing something about GCSE he'll ask 'how are they getting on now?' This is done regularly by him, very regularly. I mean it's not an idiosyncratic thing, so it's kept to the forefront of your mind all the time"* (History HoD: Int one, q 3)

In addition to these comments, the HoY 10/11 and the languages teacher specifically mentioned the Headteacher's lead in improving the GCSE results of 'borderline C' pupils:

- *"I've just seen the Head for the last twenty minutes and again it's the same stuff - making sure that we get these kids up to Cs"* (HoY 10/11: Int two, q 1)
- *"We almost write off the pupils who are going to get Es and Fs. I find myself doing it but it's purely because the Head will come up every now and then and say 'how are you getting on with those D candidates?' We*

[127] While the Headteacher has always been instrumental in affecting teachers' working conditions (eg. Lortie, 1975), it is claimed here that, within the contemporary context, the managerialist faith in leadership ensures that he/she has now become the ultimate authority on pupil achievement. New Headteacher powers to 'hire and fire' teachers and decide salary levels highlight this sense of supreme authority (TES: November 17, 2000).

keep getting a list of borderline pupils to look at.." (Languages teacher: Int two, q 1)

While the Headteacher took a leading role in raising academic 'standards', middle managers felt increasingly and directly accountable to him. In times of 'poor' school performance (such as the 1998 GCSE results), this sense of accountability towards the Head had intensified. Thus, 'pressure' was exerted in inverse proportion to 'success', mirroring New Labour's policy response to schools which are deemed to be underachieving[128]. The Headteacher justified this accountability arrangement once more on the grounds that it reflected the 'current reality of teaching':

"Staff know that I'm looking at results all the time - that's part of my job. If subjects aren't doing as well as anyone else I want to know why. In terms of staff relations, I don't think it's an abrasive relationship. I don't think they are comfortable being under the microscope all the time but I think people accept that that's part of the job" (Int one, q 6).

Almost all the teachers in the study acknowledged that the focus on raising exam performances was indeed an important aspect of teaching (see next chapter). The HoD (history), for example, mentioned that this focus could help teachers structure their work more effectively. Further, the HoD (maths) commented that targets could be beneficial as long as they were accomplished "in a supportive manner" (Int two, q 8). However, in the light of more detailed observations, it was clear that there were a number of deep concerns about an *over-emphasis on results*. The DHC, for example,

felt that the substantial time he spent assessing, predicting and monitoring grades made him feel almost like a 'policeman' in carrying out his role. Further, he felt it was unnecessary to constantly pressurise teachers by employing such methods as comparative subject critiques at Key Stages 3 and 4 (Int one, q 1). The English HoD, too, talked about the perpetual 'anxiety about performance' as a potentially negative factor in teaching. This evidently manifested itself in one teacher's experiences:

> *"You do feel more accountable for your results and, it sounds horrible, but you do look at kids in your class knowing that they're going to bring down those results.."* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 5).

Most teachers also expressed their serious concerns about the *invalidity of accountability* measures[129]. Here, the DHC felt that it was implausible to compare different subjects with one another, given the different levels of exam difficulty and the unique academic enquiry involved in each[130]. The HoD (history) also pointed to the distinct cohorts of pupils that emerge year-on-year as a significant factor of influence in any measure of school 'outcomes'. This judgement was endorsed by the DHC, particularly as a rationale for the 'poor' 1998 levels of school performance:

- *"Year groups vary enormously, you know. You get 'a bum year' sometimes, and other times you get 'a good year'. There is this level of unpredictability to the game which all the accountability in the world can only tinker with really"* (History HoD: Int one, q 2)

---

[128] In the TES (November 3, 2000) a DfEE spokeswoman commented: "The self-managed school is the key unit for raising standards. The more it is successful, the more it should be left to run its own affairs".

[129] See also chapters Four and Six concerning discussions about the invalidity of 'outcome values' which are used as accountability targets.

- *"We always felt the year we got low GCSE percentages was a year group which was a little below par. I think there is a factor here - it is totally ignored by people who are thinking 100% in terms of pupil improvement, they will not allow you to say that"* (DHC: Int two, q 1) [131]

Some teachers pointed to the benefits which could be derived from an alternative focus on accountability measures. Specifically, they indicated that schools should be held accountable not only for their results but also for the welfare of their staff. The HoY 8/9, for example, suggested that some independent agency should be charged with the duty of combating the amount of "unnecessary work being done by teachers in schools" (HoY 8/9: Int two, q 8). Likewise, both the HoD (history) and the DHC proposed the introduction of an independent inspection body that would assess the contemporary concerns of teachers in schools. In light of the pressures and stress which teachers currently experience, this proposal could be legitimated at the very least (using managerialist parlance) as "a health and safety issue" (History HoD: Int two, q 8)[132].

Should an independent body be established to investigate teachers' concerns in the job, it is probable that the issue of 'time' would emerge as a significant determinant. Section Three now gives credence to this claim.

---

[130] In addition to this point, Docking (ed: 2000, p53) points to the invalidity of accountability measures at the macro level stating that, while no year-on-year comparisons are possible, there can be no proof that national targets (in English and maths, for example) are being met by New Labour.
[131] An interesting point emerges from the DHC's comments here - and that is, within the 'progressive' (or 'tough' - Fairclough, 2000) language form of an 'authoritative' school effectiveness model, an admittance of the school's limited capacity for improvement is almost tantamount to being fatalistic about its potential future. This reinforces the point made earlier in chapter Three i.e. that an 'authoritative' position is one which refuses to question the viability of its own idealistic claims.
[132] While the STRB (School Teachers Review Body) may claim to address all these matters, this particular agency was not mentioned by the teachers concerned. Perhaps this suggests the need not only for an independent review body to overlook teachers' concerns, but (as chapter Ten highlights) one which also has a significant *political bargaining* power base.

Section Three: 'Raising Standards', reducing time

Discussions thus far point to the fact that teachers' time in the job is being increasingly colonised by the workload and accountability demands of the 'raising standards' agenda. As one teacher commented, "the demands on your time is constant" (Languages teacher: Int one, q 4), while another evoked the concern that "you're never on top of things nowadays" (Maths HoD: Int one, q 4). This proliferation of administrative responsibilities and tasks (both at middle and classroom management levels) was shown to have a significant *impact on teaching*. In particular, it was indicated that such work changes impinged upon the time teachers spent preparing their lessons:

- *"Sometimes the teaching part of my job is unsatisfactory because I feel at times that I'm not doing as good a job as a teacher [..] I haven't the time to prepare lessons as I should be doing.."* (English HoD: Int one, q 10)
- *"My free lessons seem to be taken up with other initiatives rather than lesson preparation.."* (Languages teacher: Int two, q 8)
- *"I think a lot of people with a lot of experience feel that there are so many things to be concerned about, and things to be watching out for, and things to be implementing in your classroom practice. It actually leaves you little time just to think about your lessons and what you're going to do in them"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 1)

For the English teacher the issue of non-contact time was meaningful in this sense because it represented an opportunity space for staff to prepare more thoroughly[133]. As it stood, however, much of the existing non-contact time in the school seemed to be taken up by 'cover' or administrative duties (Maths teacher: Int two, q 8). Unsurprisingly, then, there were calls by some practitioners to explore ways in which more effective use could be made of this 'space' in teachers' work.

The tightness of teachers' 'time space' meant that classroom instruction was affected in other significant ways. Some teachers like the DHC, for example, felt that creativity had been somewhat "stifled" by the sharp narrow focus of teaching (Int one, q 6). His concern was shared by others who felt that while the national curriculum structure was useful in guiding classroom instruction, it could also be unduly pressurising and creatively inflexible:

- *"I think we need the structure there to guide us in our teaching but the pressure to get through it is difficult [..] it's flat out all the time. You are worried if you go off on a tangent or if you're losing time"* (HoY 10/11: Int two, q 2)
- *"I certainly find that there is pressure in covering the syllabus, especially in relation to Key Stage 4 because there is an end product at the end of the term and you've always got a deadline to meet"* (HoY 8/9: Int one, q 5)
- *"We seemed to have lost that little bit of slack we had for innovation i.e. teachers following topics that children seemed to be enthralled with and*

[133] A Hargreaves (1992a, 1994a) points out in his study of US elementary school teachers that, even if extended, non-contact time is not necessarily used by practitioners for lesson preparation purposes. Indeed, he found that many teachers utilised this 'space' in their working day to catch up on their administrative duties (see also Nias: 1989, Helsby: 1999).

expanding them. There seems to be little time to do that" (Science teacher: Int one, q 4)

The HoY 8/9 also pointed to the concern that there was little room in the job for social interaction among colleagues:

"I do not have time in the job to talk to adults. I may have a day where I haven't said hello to somebody" (HoY 8/9: Int one, q 10).

This 'social relations' effect had a number of implications for school culture and the way in which teachers personally/professionally perceived themselves therein (see chapter Eight).

The time which teachers had at their disposal to discuss pedagogical matters was also perceived to be minimal. Considering the importance attached to 'raising standards' in the classroom, it seemed ironic to think that this fundamental aspect of their job was being neglected:

- *"We discuss teaching strategies at departmental meetings but I mean that kind of thing comes at the bottom of the pile given all these obligatory things. I appreciate that there's probably a greater role for that kind of opportunity"* (History HoD: Int one, q 8)
- *"I've tried for eighteen years now to get that sort of pedagogical discussion going but almost inevitably I've so much to discuss in senior management meetings and to do in general administration that that gets put aside - it's the thing that gets done last"* (Maths HoD: Int one, q 6)
- *"We never have time to discuss teaching methods and strategies, apart from talking about having to reappraise Key Stage 3 - but what we do in*

terms of week-to-week, no we don't have time. At the moment we don't observe each other at all and I think that would be a really good thing, but again it's about time" (English teacher: Int one, q 8)

The amount (as well as the substance) of meetings was perceived by many teachers to be influential in explaining this diminished opportunity for pedagogical discussion. Faculty meetings, for example, were pointed out by the languages teacher to be directed by managerial concerns, while matters relating to the teaching act itself became regularly sidelined (Int one, q 6). Further, the maths teacher, endorsing earlier comments by the PE teacher (PE teacher: Int one, q 6), commented that year meetings too were overly concerned with 'processes' and failed to give adequate time to individual pupil matters (Maths teacher: Int one, q 10).

Pupils' 'time space' at school was likewise considered to be squeezed by the demands of the 'raising standards' agenda. Earlier discussions in this work pointed to the predominance of an *intensification model of learning* in producing this condition and endorsing a 'transmissive' style of pedagogy (see chapters Two and Four). This phenomenon was borne out in the empirical results. The HoD (maths), for example, commented:

"At the back of my mind I have a feeling [..] we're cramming - I mean we always crammed but it's more so now" (Int two, q 7).

The DHC and the Deputy SENCO, too, pointed to the plethora of learning schemes in operation (such as homework and reading clubs, study skills courses, revision classes etc.) which extended the school day for many pupils. On the whole, these were considered useful and were legitimated according to their pragmatic value in helping

pupils 'through the exams'. However, there were serious concerns (as highlighted earlier in section One) about the sheer intensity of this approach to learning. Specifically, it was shown that high pupil expectations (normally associated with 'effectiveness' criteria) could actually be counter-productive:

> *"I think that kids are put under a lot of pressure by us in having to achieve. They must have horrendous days and they just need a respite and yet we can't give it to them. But you want to prepare them as best as you can - it's the nature of the system that you want as much out of the kids as other subject teachers do, so you tend to work to deadlines along with the kids.."* (HoY 8/9: Int one, q 5).

The efficacy of the 'raising standards' agenda, then, was largely rationalised by teachers in accordance with the benefits derived by pupils. In addition, it was considered to be almost inevitable that the total energy invested into 'raising standards' simply 'had to pay off'. This acquiescent (but somewhat imperfect) view of the efficacy of the 'raising standards' agenda was summed up by the English teacher:

> *"I'm sure that all these initiatives can help learning and teaching. I mean if you throw enough mud in there some of it is going to stick"* (Int one, q 8).

Thus, to a large extent, the 'raising standards' *focus* was seen as something positive (see also questionnaire responses in chapter Six). Discussions in this chapter, however, reveal a number of contradictory findings which question the viability of this value position. Significantly, these findings highlight that teachers' support for the 'raising standards' agenda remains sharply uneven. By way of further illustration, many teachers in the study had significant concerns about the *lack of evaluation of*

change. Most of these concerns were borne out of a professional critique of the initiatives themselves, particularly in relation to how they were represented and effected in school. Specifically, teachers believed that there ought to be more discussions and debate not only regarding the processes, but also concerning the impact of these changes on teachers' (and pupils') personal working conditions. For the Head of Year 8/9, for example, meetings were considered to be overcrowded by 'raising standards' initiatives leaving scant opportunity for reflecting on the question 'why am I doing these?' (Int one, q 6). The fact that the school had set aside just one day to review the 'effectiveness' of all 'raising standards' initiatives authenticates this teacher's concerns. Further, because of the sheer volume of the 'raising standards' agenda (as mentioned in section One), a number of teachers became concerned about the interaction of all its various strands:

- *"I don't think it's really taken on board [the fact that] you've got all these separate things going on, and how they're going to interact with each other and what it's really going to mean to people - is it going to mean that nothing happens because there's too many different strands?, or is it going to mean that nothing is going to happen because you haven't really taken everyone on board? (you've just got these few people who are involved). I don't know if anyone does look - you see what I mean?"* (English teacher: Int one, q 2)

- *"I don't really feel that we've reflected on how these initiatives have been working or whether implementing 'this' has taken away from 'this'"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 3)

Teachers needed, therefore, in the words of the science teacher, to have "that extra time to sit back and reflect" on what they did in school (Int one, q 10). Specifically, in terms of the 'raising standards' agenda, some challenged the unthinking nature of both its conception and delivery. As the HoD (science) put it:

> *"I don't see much problem-solving [..] I see a lot of people carrying out these initiatives but I don't see an in-depth analysis of them..."* (Int two, q 5).

It is worth noting that attempts to redress this 'evaluation problem' can be problematic. On the one hand, proposals for the provision of more time and/or the development of a new evaluative culture may actually serve to (paradoxically) heighten the intensification process in school (see chapter Eight). On the other, attempts at resolution may result in the endorsement of a managerialist settlement which fudges a solution to the problem[134].

Discussions in this section have highlighted that while 'raising standards' demands intensify and teachers' workload augments, their associative 'time space' becomes increasingly squeezed. 'Time', therefore, remains a constant concern of teachers. Thus, when teachers were asked the question: *if you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?* (Int one, q 10b), the vast majority of responses centred around this issue. Here, some spoke about the need for more time to prepare lessons; others about the need to reduce their time spent in meetings or performing bureaucratic tasks; while others still wanted more time to relax, reflect in the job and/or discuss practice with their colleagues.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the intensity of the 'raising standards' agenda and its impact on teachers' work practice. Specifically, it is shown that teachers perceive the 'raising standards' agenda to be affective in three significant areas - namely, in relation to workload, role accountability and time demands. While all these conditions represent a significant source of intensification, it should be noted that other factors too contribute to this process. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the size of the school and the degrees of expectation at parental, governmental and societal levels are likely to be influential in this respect. Further, it is acknowledged that the teaching act itself is characterised as an intensive activity. The vocational substance of the job, for example, often evokes additional and voluntary commitment from teachers. This 'goodwill' standard (which is difficult to quantify) is frequently considered by teachers to be indicative of their effectiveness in the job:

> *"I'm always amazed at the time that certainly a lot of staff put in [..] In the English corridor at lunchtime, there are always kids in sitting down with a teacher going over things and teachers coming in before school etc. People are generally noble I think"* (English HoD: Int one, q 7).

How individuals respond to the intensification process is complex. Teachers in this study, for example, have pointed to the importance of colleagues' support (particularly at departmental level) in coping with the pressures of the job. The role of the middle manager (i.e. HoD) was important here in enabling a supportive culture to develop within the department. In addition, teachers' personal/professional adaptation to

---

[134] It is claimed here that the school's attempt to solve the 'evaluation problem' by means of creating a one-day review of all 'raising standards' initiatives is indicative of this second alternative. Hence,

change (influenced by their own levels of teaching experiences and responsibilities in school) will always have some subjective influence in determining their responses to the intensification process.

In highlighting these variable circumstances, this is not to deny the fact that *all* teachers are faced with changes to their working environment. As mentioned in chapter Four, such changes can have profound effects on their levels of job satisfaction. This was manifest in the empirical results. When asked the question: *at present, how would you describe your level of job satisfaction?* (Int one, q 10a), most teachers responded in relatively positive terms. It was notable, however, that these responses were frequently diluted by qualifying statements of concern. The Headteacher, for example, spoke about "exciting times in education" but was worried about the 'conflicting future' ahead. The DHC, too, felt that his level of job satisfaction (although relatively high) "had dropped over the past five years" due to the narrow focus on results and a loss of control in his job. This latter concern was shared by the HoD (maths). The English teacher likewise felt that her job satisfaction levels were 'pretty high' but stated that while some initiatives were of worth, others had to be consciously and pragmatically set aside. Meanwhile, both the English HoD and the Deputy SENCO commented that their enjoyment of teaching fluctuated considerably, while the HoY 10/11 spoke about his thorough dislike of the direction of change[135]. In all cases, it was clear that the intensification problem had been affective (at least to some degree). This corroborates many research findings on this issue (e.g. Menter et al: 1997, Whitty, Power and Halpin: 1998, Helsby: 1999).

---

this strategy may be seen (despite best intentions) as a fudged managerialist solution.

Notions such as 'job satisfaction' and 'motivation' in teaching are given a 'material reality' not just through changes in the organisation of work, but also via changes in its 'imagination' (du Gay, 1996). This highlights the fact that the ideological commitment to 'raising standards' is important not only in producing conditions of intensification but also in setting out new ideals for thinking about *professionalism*. This has important implications for the way teachers view their own professional identity and practice, as well as their cultural working relationships in school. It is to these issues which chapter Eight now turns.

[135] In conjunction with his dislike of the direction of change ("it's hard not to be cynical"), the HoY 10/11 spoke of his wish to retire in the next five years after twenty five years of service at Lee Valley.

Chapter Eight: 'Raising Standards' and its Impact on Teacher Professionalism

"To be 'professional' is to have acquired a set of skills through competency-based training which enables one to deliver efficiently according to contract a customer-led service in compliance with accountability procedures collaboratively implemented and managerially assured" (Hoyle: 1995, p60).

Introduction

On the 12th of September, 2000 I visited Lee Valley in a supply teaching capacity. Upon leaving at the end of the school day, the Headteacher approached me and asked: 'have you seen the exam results?'. I replied that I had and congratulated him and his staff on their achievements. It was after this that the Head said something to me which made me take note and reflect– his words were, 'you see, we must be getting it right'. On the face of it, this expression appeared to ring true. To any outsider (parent, community member or government official), Lee Valley would be perceived as providing (in Ofsted parlance) 'good value for money' - 'standards' would be seen as improving. A closer scrutiny of this perception, however, prompted me to question whether this public image concealed more than it made known. Specifically, I began to question whether there were aspects of current policy and practice where 'we were getting it wrong'.

This chapter develops from this enquiry. Specifically, it is shaped by a critical analysis of the assumption that teacher professionalism is enhanced as school 'standards' (in a managerialist sense) are improved (DfEE: 1997a, 1998a). Discussions presented here, therefore, attempt to critique the impact of the 'raising standards' agenda on teacher professionalism. To this effect, section One begins by outlining the new professional context within which teachers work. Here, a number of features are identified which remain central to, what I call, the new conception of a teacher 'professional'. In promoting this model, it is argued that the state actively encourages a so-called 'proletarianization' process in teaching. Section Two proceeds by examining this claim. Specifically, two areas of teachers' work are looked at in this respect - namely, classroom teaching and teachers' social relations in the job. From an empirical perspective, this section ends by questioning whether or not teachers feel they are in control over their own work. The chapter then concludes by reflecting once more on the Headteacher's comments (given above), and the following problem is duly posed:

at what cost to teacher professionalism are we 'getting it right'?

Section One: The new conception of a teacher 'professional'

The 'raising standards' agenda does not operate, to use Connell's phrase, in a 'moral vacuum' (1985, p 175). Instead, as outlined in chapter Three, it is applied in the context of a re-imagination of teachers' work in line with "prevailing ethical systems and political rationalities" (du Gay: 1996, p59). In promoting the 'raising standards' agenda, then, it is claimed here that New Labour is concurrently endorsing a new set of professional 'responsibilities' in teaching. Teachers are thus being pressurised into complying with a complex set of rules which govern both their seen and 'unseen'

practices in the classroom (S Robertson, 1999). While section Two addresses the effects on teachers' sense of work autonomy and on their social relations in the job, this section delineates some important features which remain central to both the meaning and composition of this new teacher 'professional' conception. The first of these features highlights the fact that teachers are under increasing *moral pressure* to conform to new professional responsibilities[136]. This is exemplified by the renewed emphasis on an 'academic care ethic' in the job (to be discussed later in this section). It is also manifest in the substance of new professional demands which obliges teachers (as state functionaries) to carry out what is required of them in the job (see chapter Nine)[137].

In practice, the moral pressure felt by teachers towards the 'raising standards' agenda strongly exhibits itself in their approach to classroom teaching. Here, teachers in this study were sharply conscious of the need to deliver relevant, exam-focused lessons (see section Two). Further, they felt obliged (in line with an 'intensification model of learning') to provide their pupils with extended 'learning' opportunities (often outside of school hours). This was frequently rationalised by the teachers themselves as a means of getting their kids 'through the course' (e.g. Maths teacher: Int one, q 5). Thus, putting on extra revision classes became "a kind of unwritten expectation" in the school (ibid.). Some teachers felt uncomfortable about this arrangement:

---

[136] This *moral* pressure to conform to new professional responsibilities operates alongside *structural* pressures which shape the kinds of professional expectations and professional development which teachers experience. These latter forces include initial teacher training regulations and formal continuing professional development courses (Helsby, 1999). These are mentioned again in section Two of this chapter.

[137] This professional function of teachers ('carrying out what's required of them') acts as a form of moral pressure and goes some way in explaining our sample group's predominantly 'positive' responses to the 'raising standards' agenda (see especially the questionnaire study in chapter Six). A further explanation may lie with the fact that it remains difficult for the teacher professional to oppose change since the 'raising standards' agenda is invariably presented in a *rhetorically invincible* form.

- *"There was a lot of pressure on teachers to participate in Easter revision classes etc. - I would resist that"* (English HoD: Int one, q 7)
- *"I have colleagues who are volunteering to do Easter revision and Summer schools. That's fine by me but I feel that there's a scenario whereby people who are not volunteering to do that - their subjects may be under-represented - the moral pressure on them will be quite high. This may even extend to parental pressure which might question the reasons why 'that subject' wasn't represented during the revision course"* (DHC: Int one, q 3)

Teachers are faced with numerous challenges in the job (see chapter Seven) which appear to demand increasing levels of "physical and emotional resilience" (History HoD: Int one, q 10). This has important political implications for how notions of teacher effectiveness are advanced[138]. In 'authoritative' terms, for example, such resilience may be highlighted not only as an obligatory feature of modern teaching, but also as a desirable one. Hence, there is a danger that "if you can't handle the pressure it is sometimes seen as a sign of weakness" (DHC: Int one, q 6). This infers that an 'effective' teacher is one who has *the capacity to cope with and adapt to change*[139]:

> *"If we can produce teachers that can withstand all of this pressure and be motivated for the whole of their time in teaching it will be grand, but I'm not*

---

[138] As mentioned in this study (with respect to an 'authoritative' stance), school effectiveness research is constantly susceptible to various political interests. One needs to be aware, therefore, that while it may be observed that contemporary teachers need to be resilient both physically and emotionally, this perception leaves itself open to explicit political manipulation. This highlights the fact that since school/teacher effectiveness ideas are intrinsically 'theory bound' (Doyle, 1986), they need to be scrutinised not just from an empirical base but also from the political perspective in which they are both situated and interpreted.

[139] It is interesting to note that this view (which is normally associated with those who 'authoritatively' impose and re-imagine the change process) was also held by some practitioners in this study. As a point of difference, however, teachers saw numerous difficulties arising from this

sure about that - there are, for example, some difficulties in recruiting"

(DHC: Int two, q 3).

In terms of teaching, too, an effective teacher was seen as one who could withstand the constant pressure of meeting deadlines and who could strike a good balance between delivering a rigid syllabus and creating his/her own classroom direction

(Headteacher, HoY 8/9: Int two, q 2).

Most teachers highlighted the need to be well organised in their work. The plethora of 'raising standards' demands necessitated this conscious approach to workload management and teachers often had to prioritise their duties in school. There was a strong sense too amongst teachers of a 'school role' in 'raising standards'. By this, they were conscious of their wider responsibilities to the organisation (see the questionnaire study in chapter Six). This notion of *corporate identity* signifies an integral part of the managerialist programme for change:

"The creation of a sense of ownership - of missions and targets, budgets and responsibility for results - has been one of the most sought after effects of the managerial revolution, constructing commitment and motivation among staff in the pursuit of corporate objectives" (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p79).

In relation to educational outcomes, for example, most teachers recognised that their own individual performances were being scrutinised in line with whole school targets. Also, in terms of teachers' professional development, it was widely recognised that there was a shift from focusing on the needs of the individual towards incorporating

---

professional expectation of 'coping with and adapting to change'. In particular, they were worried about the effects on teacher motivation and recruitment, as the following quote attests.

those of the organisation. This emphasis on the needs of the organisation appeared to foster a type of professional who could not only cope with and adapt to change but also one who would *accept* it as part of the 'current reality of teaching' (see chapter Seven). Corporate identity, therefore, demanded not just a commitment to school objectives but also an assimilation of hegemonic values. Thus, teachers may be judged not only in accordance with their own benefits to the organisation, but also in relation to their appropriation of corporate value-systems. Any challenge to such values could prove to hinder the career opportunities of individuals. This was made explicit by one teacher in the sample group[140]:

> *"There is an example in this school of one teacher who very recently has produced health and safety reports on the gym area - damning reports. Now very few members of staff know it (I only know it through gossip), but I know that the reaction of senior management to this particular teacher (who is excellent) is that he is frowned upon. That teacher knows full well that he won't get promotion within the school. That has happened a number of times - people knowing that they aren't going to get anywhere"* (Anon teacher: Int two, q 8).

It is claimed here that the notion of corporate identity tends to produce 'standardised' practices in the workplace. This is manifest in the establishment of management systems (presided over by 'mini leaders') which foster common modes of action in

---

[140] The following quote highlights one teacher's challenge to organisational values (in this case the challenge is aimed at 'official' representations of health and safety provision). While the explanation given (that this teacher's career chances have deteriorated as a result of non-conformity to an organisational solidarity ideal) may be valid, one cannot say with certainty that it is absolute. There may be other reasons (relating to power-relations factors or teacher 'effectiveness' criteria, for example) why this teacher might have been out of favour with senior management. It should be

relation to such matters as discipline, assessment and new policy procedures. Teaching, too, which was once less dependent on structure is now increasingly standardised through common curricula and more prescriptive syllabuses. While a sense of organisational solidarity thus endures (at least in terms of process), paradoxically a *culture of individualism* is simultaneously fostered. This manifests itself in the form of increased individual responsibility, a re-focus of management-teacher relations, and an emphasis on career advancement (see chapter Three). This latter feature was commented upon by teachers in this study. The Headteacher, for example, believed that teachers became involved with 'raising standards' initiatives not just out of interest but also through a willingness to advance their own careers:

> *"I think when we set up working parties people are genuinely interested - not least because they have something to put on their CV [..] People are more willing to give up their time partly because they have to but also because it helps with their professional development"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 5).

While increased levels of responsibility proffered the opportunity for early career advancement, there were aspects of this culture of individualism which appeared objectionable to teachers. In particular, PRP proposals signified an area of clear contention (see chapter Nine). Further, there was a strong sense of personal/professional criticism towards this individualistic culture:

- *"People are trying to make teaching more 'professional' - they're trying, for example, to judge and pay you by performance and turn you into a business person. I mean, it's like that now - headteachers are running*

---

noted, therefore, that the explanation account given is the personal view of one teacher in the sample group.

schools like a business. I don't agree with this image" (Languages teacher: Int two, q 3)

- *"I hear quite high ranking members of the school talking about general members of staff saying: 'Oh I think she made a bad mistake in doing such and such'. They're thinking in terms of career orientation. The fact that this teacher might like to put her young children first (which is a biological norm) doesn't occur to them because they don't think in those terms"*

  (Anon HoD: Int two, q 8)

Within the 'authoritative' model of school effectiveness, the exemplar teacher professional is perceived in terms of his/her level of commitment to the 'raising standards' agenda. In essence, 'raising standards' is treated as a serious concern and one which must be fully supported by teachers. The proliferation of accountability and workload demands, together with a managerialist faith in leadership *over* teachers, serve to guarantee (as far as possible) this effect. Fundamentally, this constitutes a *low trust* approach to teacher professionalism (Troman, 2000). In the words of one HoD, this is almost tantamount to the belief that "if we don't cane them and overload them, they'll just go off the boil" (Anon HoD: Int two, q 8). Teachers' personal/professional critique of this position, however, is frequently directed at the concern that 'there is only so much we can do' (see chapter Seven)[141]. In addition, there is the concern that at some point a 'ceiling effect' will be arrived at whereby further improvements simply cannot happen (see chapter Nine). In response to this latter concern, it is unlikely that

---

[141] On this point, Hargreaves and Evans (1997, p7) note: "Self-improvement is an admirable virtue, of course; but when everyone is urged to commit to continuous improvement as an unending professional obligation, then just like the children of parents who are never really satisfied, teachers can experience the agenda of improvement as one where their superiors and inspectors seem endlessly obsessed with their imperfections".

an 'authoritative' school effectiveness position will relent in its efforts to put further pressure on teachers. This strategy is rationalised on the grounds that it serves to avert the 'threat of professional complacency'. Interestingly, this was a view held by the Headteacher of the school:

> *"If you reach 'the ceiling', complacency settles in and what I would say [..] is that we must avoid complacency. A good teacher, just as a good school, can always be better"* (Int two, q 1).

One of the consequences of the school's efforts to avoid 'complacency' in this way was that some teachers felt the whole business of 'raising standards' had become too serious an affair. As the DHC put it[142]:

> *"It might be in some quarters a bit wimpish to say this, but I think we should be enjoying ourselves a bit more"* (Int one, q 6).

This had a number of implications for how teachers perceived themselves as professionals. In essence, many teachers felt that they had to *play a role*, especially when conversing and dealing with senior members of staff. They thus regulated their own behaviour "by the imagined judgement of others" (Waller: 1965, p322) and became more concerned about how they thought others think they should behave (Pheysey, 1993). The Deputy SENCO, for example, commented that she 'ran the risk' of laughing and joking in the job (Int one, q 6). She thus equated her sense of fun in the job with the danger of being labelled as 'not serious' about 'raising standards'. Elaborating on this point, she recounted a story of a visit by a SENCO teacher from a neighbouring school. According to this visiting teacher, the focus on 'raising

standards' in her own school had made it a 'grim' place to teach and learn. What had drawn her attention to this fact was an official complaint on the part of one member of staff about some colleagues who, in their non-contact time, had been laughing and joking in the staffroom. Both SENCOs at the time had commented to each other (tongue-and-cheek style) that: "you'd think they would have had something better to do than laughing". This whimsical story reveals a serious side - that is, when teachers perceive themselves by the imagined (and 'professional') judgement of others, this often lends itself to the adoption of a certain form of 'image management' in the job. This point is further developed in Chapter Nine.

A final feature which remains central to this new conception of a teacher professional is now discussed. As mentioned in the previous chapter, 'raising standards' is proffered by those in power as the rationale for 'progressive' change. While there is little doubt that the motivation for change is aimed at the reconstruction of school culture (see chapter Three), the over-arching principle behind this purpose is its 'customer-centred' orientation (Clarke and Newman, 1997)[143]. This principle which focuses on the needs of the 'client' (note language) becomes integrated into the practices of the new professional teacher. In essence, this calls for *an academic care ethic* in the job commensurate with the demands of the 'raising standards' agenda. In this way, teachers are urged to regulate their own practice by the perceived (and

---

[142] The following quote may be taken as a symbolic rejection of a macho-style approach to the management of change.

[143] It's important to note that, in essence, a 'customer-centred' focus is not exclusive to managerialism. Different models of teacher professionalism, it is argued, are concerned with pupils' needs. It is recognised, however, that these 'needs' are located within unique educational perspectives which often span across different historical contexts and are largely contingent upon an interpretive analysis of various economic, socio-cultural and political factors.

'official') needs of the consumer (du Gay, 1996)[144]. Certainly in this study there was a strong sense amongst teachers that 'an academic care ethic' was indeed an important aspect of their job. At all times, this 'raising standards' focus was rationalised in terms of the potential benefits for the pupils:

- *"I think what's happened is we are becoming aware of the fact that we have to be better at what we do and there's nothing wrong with that for the sake of the children. That must be about 'raising standards'"*

  (Headteacher: Int two, q 1)

- *"There is 'teaching to the syllabus' which does require teachers to know the syllabus and be aware of examiners' reports and assessment objectives. Maybe it's no bad thing because it may be sharpening our awareness of what is necessary to get pupils through the exams"* (English HoD: Int two, q 2)

- *"To me, the fundamental reasoning behind all this change is that the child will benefit academically"* (Maths HoD: Int two, q 7)

On a pragmatic level, then, most teachers were willing to assist their pupils in "beating the system" (DHC: Int two, q 1). Some teachers like the HoD (maths), the science teacher and the Headteacher believed that their professionalism had been enhanced because 'they could now do more for their pupils' (through the use of new data analysis and monitoring techniques, for example). They were thus more likely to accept 'official' guidelines on issues of professional development. Others

---

[144] It should be recognised that there are dangers in incorporating an unqualified 'client focus' within professional practice. As Hoyle (1995, p65) notes, "to make consumers the sole arbiters of what and how the professions should function would be to undermine the expertise which is central to the idea of a profession".

acknowledged some positive aspects of the emphasis on 'an academic care ethic', but still retained a number of personal/professional points of critique. These were consistent with the different meanings they attached to the term 'standards' (see chapter Six), where it was noted that pupils' needs extended beyond the academic concern. The different meanings attached to 'standards' coupled with disparate views on pupils' needs, thus served to highlight teachers' own varying 'professional' value positions. These contrasted perspectives were also shaped by the unique characteristics of the teachers themselves (such as, biography details, status, and levels of teaching experience), as well as by their individual responses to change (particularly in relation to their mediation of hegemonic professional values). Chapter Nine elaborates further on these points.

This section has been concerned with highlighting *some* important features which are inherent to the promotion of a new type of teacher 'professional'. Teachers' working conditions should not be seen in isolation from this analysis. In particular, workload and accountability demands, together with a sense of reduced time in the job, all have a significant bearing on how teachers respond to new 'professional' expectations. Further, the managerialist drive to shape new notions of self-identity (see chapter Three) is seen as important in influencing teachers' responses. From a structural perspective, too, the state's active interest in initial teacher education and formal continuing professional development courses is instrumental in this respect (see Helsby: 1999, pp150-162). All of these factors need to be taken into account when considering what it means to be 'professional' within the contemporary context - Hoyle's (1995) thorough definition at the outset of this chapter reminds us of this fact.

In promoting a new conception of teacher professionalism, it is argued that the state actively encourages a so-called 'proletarianization' process in teaching[145]. Following on from discussions in chapter Four, Section Two now looks at this claim from an empirical perspective. Specifically, it examines the extent to which teachers feel they can control their own work.

Section Two: Proletarianization in practice?

The reader will recall from chapter Four that the concept of proletarianization is specifically used to refer to: the increased division of teachers' labour; the separation of conception from the execution of tasks; the proliferation of workload demands and; the reduction of teachers' autonomy and use of skills in the workplace. The resultant combination of these factors, it is claimed, serves to 'deskill' teachers' work (Ozga and Lawn: 1981, Apple: 1986, Densmore: 1987). Proponents of the proletarianization thesis thus highlight that teachers are becoming increasingly isolated in the workplace and are losing control over the professional determination of their work. While the thesis remains highly contestable[146], this section draws attention to its significance as a theoretical tool for understanding teachers' diminished ability for professional self-

---

[145] As explicated in chapter Four, proletarianization (as discussed here) is not wholly seen as a direct consequence of intensification. Instead, and in conjunction with section One's analysis, it is shown to largely derive from 'official' conceptions of what it now means to be 'professional'.

[146] On this point Smyth et al (2000, p52) note: "within the literature on the labour process of teaching, although most scholars are sympathetic to the concept, there are divisions of opinion about the extent to which it is an inevitable process. Some scholars insist that it does not occur at all (Lauder and Yee, 1987); some argue that proletarianization of teaching is already well advanced (Harris, 1990); some suggest that teachers may become partially but not fully proletarianized (Densmore, 1987); some maintain that there is a very strong tendency for teachers' work to be proletarianized (Apple: 1986, 1993); and some aver that the process is not inevitable but contested (Lawn and Ozga, 1988)".

control. Two areas of teachers' work are looked at in this respect - namely, classroom teaching and teachers' social relations in the job[147].

Classroom Teaching

In relation to the first of these, the state's influence on initial teacher 'training' (note language), as well as on the area of CPD (Continuing Professional Development), is seen as significant. Specifically, the state is instrumental in fostering a new emphasis on school-based learning whereby student, trainee and practising teachers are encouraged to adopt a more 'back to basics' approach to their discipline (Hartley: 1998, Helsby: 1999). As Goodson (2000, p14) highlights:

> *"... there is increasing evidence that the knowledge that workers and professionals are being given in training is, in spite of globalization, less and less general and more and more context-specific, local and utilitarian".*

The funding arrangements for professional development courses are also linked to the new 'priorities' of the managerial state. This was evident as far back as the 1980s when much of the budget for CPD courses was given to management training or to training for the implementation of the National Curriculum (Helsby, 1999). In line with an 'authoritative' promotion of a technical model of education (see chapter Three), these courses appear to depict 'training' as a set of engineering or technical skills that can be acquired. The concept of 'skill', as used in this context, thus implies:

---

[147] It is accepted that these two aspects of teachers' work are inter-related. As A Hargreaves (1994a, p165) notes, "what goes on inside the teacher's classroom cannot be divorced from the relations that are forged outside it".

> *"only that which is technical and based on a process which places emphasis on performance monitoring and subject-centred instruction"* (Apple and Jungck: 1992, p26).

While teachers are increasingly subjected to the state's drive for tighter classroom structures and teacher control, it is a moot point whether they feel somewhat suppressed by this supposed 'technicization' of the workplace. The following discussion now explores some empirical findings on this issue.

A predominant theme which emerged from this study's data was that teachers felt that teaching had become increasingly *exam focused* in its orientation[148]. In particular, it was widely believed that staff had become much more aware of the need to get good results from their classes:

> *"I find myself doing what I said I would never do - I'm teaching to the exam. I'm not teaching in a processing sense, I'm teaching the exam. My life also involves rushing to the classroom to teach science and when I get there trying to be an 'effective' teacher in this respect"* (DHC: Int one, q 5).

This idea of 'teaching to the test' is corroborated by empirical evidence elsewhere (egs. Gipps: 1993, Hargreaves and Evans: 1997). While it was rationalised by teachers in this study as being a functional strategy for helping pupils 'succeed', there were concerns about its 'over-emphasis' (as highlighted in chapter Seven):

> *"It's a sort of stress factor - when I go in there I've got to be so serious about the syllabus and the next module test and I have to explain to the pupils how*

[148] McCulloch (2000, p26) has claimed that teachers' work has "for a long time been regulated by prescribed syllabuses and the public examinations". While this may be so, it is maintained in this study that such regulation has been noticeably intensified.

they can improve their exam technique. I know all that is important but it's too important" (DHC: Int one, q 5).

Such an over-emphasis on exams meant that lessons were "very sharply focused now" (Science HoD: Int one, q 5), often to the point where 'relevance' took precedence over 'interest' in deciding upon the topics being delivered (Science teacher: Int one, q 5). This emphasis on raising academic 'standards' was thus at the forefront of teachers' minds in their approach to classroom teaching:

"I find myself saying when I'm teaching - 'now to get the C grade you need to do this and this'.." (Languages teacher: Int two, q 1).

The school's 'borderline C' policy was instrumental in this regard. One HoD explained how his own department responded to this policy:

"Sets 3, 4, 5, and 6 is what we concentrated on because it's where the order of the C/D structure was. After the mock exams [in Year 11] we had 43 Ds so I focused on those 43 pupils and saw them and gave them lots of tips on how you could turn Ds into Cs. I gave them each a sheet which advised on things they might check before they gave an exam paper in [..] I'm trying to put together a book of GCSE questions in topics" (Maths HoD: Int one, q 1).

Some teachers felt professionally compromised by this pedagogical emphasis on exam-focused work. In essence, they believed that a more humanistic or 'learning for learning sake' approach to education (see chapter Three) should be given more adequate attention:

"Kids are much more aware of exams now. I find myself saying 'we've got to get through this exercise today because you have an exam in two weeks'. I mean we do that and it does affect their learning - it shouldn't be like that, we should be doing things for the sake of learning but at the back of your mind is exams" (Languages teacher: Int one, q 7).

The problem with 'teaching to the test', then, was that for some teachers (roughly half the sample) it made uneasy assumptions about both the meaning and purpose of education. These teachers' main objection was that education meant more than achieving 'success' in exams. Thus, it may be suggested that, from a personal/professional perspective, they felt that the current mode of education was actually failing their pupils since, in the words of Meadows (1998, p15), 'teaching to the test'

> *"...instils only knowledge which is parroted and does not inform either understanding of the real world and learners' practical life in it, or understanding and appreciation of the knowledge domain".*

From a pragmatic perspective, however, there was a sense among these teachers that there wasn't much they could do about the present educational trend towards 'outcome values'. This was largely rationalised on the grounds that working against the present system could mean delimiting pupils' 'learning' opportunities (in a technical sense). In this way, the school was active in encouraging pupils to study subjects (such as double award science and technology) which were thought to advance GCSE scores. Likewise, some teachers (notably those in the English department) felt compelled to 'shop around' for different exam boards and choose

syllabuses which were regarded as 'less challenging' for their pupils[149]. Their sense of uneasiness about this motive remained, however:

- *"The literature content is pretty heavy and partly the consequence of this is that I know there are English teachers all over the place looking for ways to short-cut the demands of literature - so fewer and fewer big worthwhile novels are being done"* (English HoD: Int one, q 5)
- *"When you're teaching you have to cut out large parts of the Shakespearean play to concentrate on what's being asked in exams which makes the pupils very dependent on you. It also takes away their chance to enjoy the whole play and get familiar with it"* (English teacher: Int two, q 6)

This last quote points to the fact that curricular controls ('what you teach') and temporal controls ('when you teach') have a significant bearing on contemporary teaching. In essence, this study found that teachers' sense of *classroom creativity* had seriously diminished:

> *"I mean although we are more aware of the syllabus (they keep changing it though) and the schemes of work (you're teaching to that all the time), you feel that you can never divert when the kids ask 'can we do that?'"*
> (Languages teacher: Int two, q 2).

This sense of control over teachers' work can have profound effects on notions of self-identity. In the case of the languages teacher, for example, she felt that she had become "a lot more boring and a bit less creative" (Int two, q 3). The English teacher,

[149] This practice also proved to be 'less challenging' for the teachers.

too, felt it was a lot less interesting for her and her pupils to have to study a Shakespearean play 'in a rigid way' with little opportunity for drama performance in the classroom (Int one, q 5). The diminished opportunity for exploratory work[150] was equated to a loss of a sense of fun in the job. The maths teacher pointed this out by claiming that investigations and 'fun maths' activities were being squeezed out of her teaching (Int two, q 2). In conjunction with the contemporary 'professional' expectation that teachers need to be 'serious' about 'raising standards' (as highlighted in section One), the DHC commented that this responsibility had reduced his enjoyment of the job (Int one, q 6). Further, the Deputy SENCO stated that in 'teaching to the test' many teachers (and pupils) were simply 'not enjoying the work' (Int one, q 5).

The proliferation of curricular and teacher controls caused some concern amongst teachers, particularly with regard to the perceived expectation that they had to comply with a more *standardised teaching approach*. The HoD (maths), for example, pointed to the school management's argument that, for any two classes of similar ability set, the two respective teachers "should approach lessons in the same way" with the aim of giving their pupils "the same learning opportunities" (Int two, q 2). This 'authoritative' pre-occupation with promoting common modes of action (in conjunction with the 'standardisation of standards' assumption – see chapter Two) may appear to make sense but, on closer inspection, it fails to consider the individual characteristics and agency of the teacher. This concern was firstly pointed out by the English HoD and then by the HoD (maths):

---

[150] The Headteacher rationalised this diminished opportunity for exploratory work on the grounds that focused 'outcomes' demanded constant attention to syllabus details: "to get from A to B in a year or two years [means] opportunities for [classroom] discussion are bound to be limited because if there is

- *"To some extent the increased prescriptiveness of the syllabuses is a kind of standardisation but to go from that to say that 'each lesson to deliver this section of the syllabus must follow a prescribed pattern' is getting into very dangerous levels there. You need to question the corporate nature of the class. There will always be variations in teaching too"* (English HoD: Int two, q 4)
- *"..I would not want to take the individuality out of teaching and I would justify that position to the end"* (Maths HoD: Int two, q 2)

There was a suggestion also that because of the state's promotion of a more 'back to basics' approach to teaching, and particularly its emphasis on 'whole class teaching'[151], a certain didactic style of teaching was being imposed:

- *"I worry about losing certain teaching styles – the old traditional ways of teaching, of setting up demonstrations in class etc. are under threat"* (Science HoD: Int one, q 8)
- *"I have Year 7s [for RE] last thing on a Friday. Now I don't want to be boring – you know, getting them to write things off the board – but I have to because they're used to it everywhere else. Educationally, that's not the way you want to do it since RE is the one lesson where the pupils can develop their own opinions. So it seems a shame that I have to teach in a certain didactic way"* (Deputy SENCO: Int two, q 6)

---

more content (syllabuses are much more content-based than ever), any chance of real exploratory work is bound to be limited" (Int one, q 4).

[151] The literacy strategy in primary schools (soon to be introduced at secondary level) is a good example of this emphasis on 'whole class teaching'. Ofsted's preoccupation with this mode of instruction also appears evident. Further, the 'authoritative' lists of 'teacher effectiveness' criteria [e.g. the Hay McBer Report (2000)] may be given as evidence of the state's desire to standardise the teaching act and promote the virtues of whole class teaching.

The above suggestion ('that teachers are being forced into whole class teaching and a didactic style of instruction'), while it cannot be fully concluded in this study, does seem to corroborate empirical results elsewhere (egs. Clarke: 1991, Woodhead: 1996, Gerwitz: 1996).

In correspondence with our discussions on intensification it was found that teachers had *little time to reflect* on their teaching. This was largely a result of the 'encroaching workload' demands on classroom preparation and teaching (Deputy SENCO: Int one, q 9). The exam-focused nature of teaching, too, made it difficult to take a more considered pedagogical approach:

> *"Everything is such a rush to cover the exam and you're teaching to a syllabus. You really can't stop and sit back. Teaching is now totally topic-based – language teaching should be more general than that"* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 5).

This points to the assertion that teachers are faced with restricted opportunities to learn by reflecting upon their own practice (Dewey: 1933, Schon: 1983). Given that reflective action is said to compose of the following four essential characteristics, a strong case is therefore made for the above claim:

1. Reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as with means and technical efficiency
2. Reflective teaching combines enquiry and implementation skills with attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness
3. Reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical or spiralling process, in which teachers continually monitor, evaluate, and revise their own practice

4. Reflective teaching is based on teacher judgement, informed partly by self-reflection and partly by insights from educational disciplines

[Southworth: 1994, p54]

While opportunities for reflective action may have diminished, a more *structured approach to teaching* seemed pronounced. This may be seen by those proponents of the proletarianization thesis as the manifestation of teachers' loss of control over the professional determination of their work. While this argument may indeed be valid, it was not fully supported by the observable facts in this study. It thus could not be presented as an absolute claim. For example, this study found that a more structured approach to teaching (in terms of prescribed syllabuses and curricular materials, for example) could be regarded by teachers as beneficial to their work:

- *"I think that teachers, on balance, prefer to have a more structured syllabus from which to work rather than what it used to be when I first qualified. I think that the more structured approach is of benefit"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 2)
- *"I feel that my teaching is much better because I like to know what's happening, where the kids should be.."* (PE teacher: Int one, q 8)
- *"[The pupils] look at a syllabus and actually follow it which is something much more open than it used to be"* (Science teacher: Int one, q 7)

In a significant sense, then, some aspects of structural control over teachers' work did not appear oppressive. *The ways in which individuals teach*, too, signified an area of

teachers' work where the concept of 'relative autonomy' existed (Broadfoot and Osborn: 1993, Pollard et al: 1994, Acker: 1999, Helsby: 1999):

- *"Despite moves to standardise teaching it doesn't mean that all teachers do the same thing – it's down to the individual teacher at the end of the day"* (HoY 8/9: Int two, q 1)
- *"I still think that good pedagogy, good methodology in the classroom means that you can have really boring topics but you can deliver them extremely well. A good teacher, in my view, is somebody who can deal not only with the really exciting stuff but who can deliver the really boring topics and get it across"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 2)[152]

What these quotes indicate, therefore, is that the capacity for teacher agency in the classroom still remains significant.

Social Relations

Any changes to teachers' work culture (such as their classroom teaching) is bound to affect the social relations which they forge in school (A Hargreaves, 1994a). Thus, while the school constitutes "a unity of interacting personalities" (Waller: 1965, p6), teacher-teacher relations can be shown to be affected to some degree[153]. The following discussion now focuses on such changes within our case study context.

---

[152] This last quote can also be interpreted as endorsing the view that a 'good' teacher is one who has the capacity to cope with and adapt to change (as mentioned in section One of this chapter).
[153] This section concentrates on teacher-teacher relations, though teacher-pupil relations are briefly mentioned later.

Many respondents commented that there was now less time in school for *social conversation* with their colleagues. This diminished opportunity for casual/informal talk represents a serious concern, especially since it's considered to be a significant factor in influencing the way teachers perceive both their pupils and their working milieu (Connell, 1985). Further, it has been evidenced that staffroom conversation can ameliorate (to some extent) the intensification of teachers' work (Nias: 1989, Woods et al: 1997). This potential benefit was obscured within our case study school, however, not least because the staffroom was close to vacant throughout the working day:

- *"The staffroom is virtually empty now – you can't tell there's one hundred and twenty staff in the school"* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 6)
- *"People can't sit down now and relax or prepare for the workload ahead. The days of going to the staffroom just to relax are gone... but we need that sometimes"* (Science HoD: Int two, q 8)

Conversations between teachers appeared increasingly focused on issues directly related to the raising of *academic* 'standards'. The resultant effect of this was that communications (especially between the SMT and middle managers) appeared to be both serious and formalised:

"I mean my own conversations with HoDs and Heads of Faculty tend to be deadly serious because we're always focused on this [academic] aspect of the school. This process is crowding the time for pleasantries in the job – it's a kind of forced conversation" (DHC: Int one, q 6).

In many ways, this *formalisation of relations* reflects the managerialist concern for individualising the relationship between 'manager and the managed'. Here, communication is reduced to an 'official' function within school (Clarke and Newman, 1997), as informal discourse becomes 'institutionalised' (Woods et al, 1997). There was a suggestion that this formalisation process could actually detract from the 'goodwill' atmosphere of the school (Headteacher: Int two, q 4). As the DHC put it:

> *"It's all got to do with the ethos of the school – it's whether colleagues can talk to myself and feel that it's confidential to do so – you've got to develop an atmosphere of support"* (Int two, q 8).

While the above desire to develop 'an atmosphere of support' is admirable, the irony remains that, as teachers become increasingly isolated in their work, the opportunity for collective discussion appears feasible only when it *does* become formalised. Thus, any form of collegial discussion (such as meetings) is likely to be presented, in the words of Hoyle (1995, p60), as 'collaboratively implemented' *yet* 'managerially assured'.

Accordingly, departmental meetings were being increasingly mediated by the SMT, not least through agendas which were pre-set in accordance with 'official' topics of discussion[154]. Further, the dialogue at these meetings could, at times, be compromised by the presence of 'line managers'. Thus, the level of genuine concerns and criticism which staff might wish to share with their colleagues could be affected by the attendance of a SMT representative. Teachers' mindfulness of this issue was exemplified by one HoD's comments:

---

[154] The reader will recall from chapter Seven that many respondents felt that meetings were too 'crowded' with little opportunity for discussions on shared practice.

"If you've got a faculty where there are no SMT members in the meetings, then you can almost have school bashing sessions and nobody is going to know" (Anon HoD: Int one, q 6).

This leads one to question the extent to which the SMT (within a managerialist framework) has the ability to be receptive to the real needs and concerns of teachers.

Of course within a large school such as Lee Valley, a certain amount of *de-personalisation* is inevitable. Not least, this is expected from the Headteacher who is presently pre-occupied (even by his own admission) with activities similar to those carried out by a 'chief executive'. As the English teacher pointed out:

"You wonder how much the Head is able to involve himself with the staff and how much he knows what they are doing – it could be a reflection of the fact that he cannot get involved" (Int one, q 9).

This de-personalisation process largely accounts for the reasons why Headteachers themselves, in a recent study, reported a deterioration in their relationships with their staff (see Menter et al: 1997, p85).

As mentioned earlier, the proliferation of 'raising standards' initiatives requires 'mini leaders' to oversee their implementation in school. The extent to which this affects teachers' social relations remains unclear. What does seem certain however is that, within the formulation stages of these initiatives, there is a *separation between manager and the managed.* This was confirmed by the vast majority of teachers in the sample who, in response to question five (interview two), commented that there was a

clear division between 'formulators and doers' in the school[155]. This also corroborates evidence elsewhere which shows "a consolidation of vertical, rather than horizontal management" within contemporary school structures (Whitty, Power and Halpin: 1998, p57). Interestingly (and contra post-modern assumptions), this exemplifies a strong Fordist doctrine whereby 'mini leaders' or supervisors are appointed the responsibility of closely regulating the professional and private behaviour of workers (see S Robertson: 1997, p629). While teachers in this study recognised that accountability demands now required that they be subjected to such regulation, some objected to the manner in which these demands were implemented. To illustrate, the maths teacher, once more, reiterated her concern that 'process' appeared to be sublimated at the expense of the individual teacher. In particular, she felt that the 'relationship between teachers was taken away' as management relentlessly focused on 'what they should be doing' (Int one, q 2). Of course, not all teacher-teacher relations will take this form. Instead, they may be shown to operate on *different levels*:

> *"Within our faculty we're very informal and very relaxed – we always make time for general chat. With more senior members of staff, it would be more formal"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 6).

While the above discussions focus on teacher-teacher relations, some comments were briefly made on the change effects on teacher-pupil relations. The English teacher, for example, pointed to the fact that there was perhaps less time out of lessons for casual conversations (Int one, q 7). The DHC, too, believed that relations had become "sharper" because of the focus on academic achievement (Int one, q 7), while the HoY

---

[155] In light of this comment, it seems more appropriate to substitute the government's recent teacher recruitment campaign slogan, 'those who can teach', with George Bernard Shaw's original quote 'those who can *do*'.

8/9 commented that such a relationship had been "put under strain" (Int one, q 7).

Further empirical evidence is needed to develop these claims.

Are teachers in control of their own work?

This section set out to explore the extent to which teachers feel they can control their own work. Two specific areas of teachers' work culture was examined in this respect – namely, classroom teaching and teachers' social relations in the job. The following discussion now looks at some conclusions which may be drawn from the analysis presented.

The evidence presented thus far points to the strong tendency that teachers' work is being increasingly proletarianized. Teachers' *loss of control* over their work manifested itself in a number of ways. Firstly, in terms of classroom teaching, it has been established that teachers like to enjoy a certain amount of flexibility in their delivery of the curriculum. This often reflects their own personal/professional approach to teaching. As Ted Wragg points out:

> *"Ask most teachers, especially those who come in from industry as mature entrants, why they originally wanted to teach and before long they will use words like 'imagination', 'initiative', 'responsibility'. People want the challenge, so no one talks the language of robots: 'dependence', 'blind obedience', 'servility'"* (TES: November 3, 2000).

From the evidence provided here, however, there appeared to be less opportunity for such curricular initiative in the classroom. Further, in terms of an increase of control

over teachers' decision-making input, there was a sense of a clear separation between 'manager and the managed' in school i.e. those who formulate policies and those who implement them. This reflects the fact that mainstream teachers are often the least able to influence school policy (Connell: 1985, p134). Indeed, as Goodson (2000, p14) indicates, teachers appear

> *"..less and less planners of their own destiny and more and more deliverers of prescriptions written by others".*

The effects of this prescriptive style of management were felt by some respondents in the study:

- *"I don't want to knock ideas [..] but it's about maybe not asking teachers in the first place"* (English teacher: Int one, q 2)
- *"I think actually that most of the 'raising standards' initiatives are implemented from the senior management, or I suppose the Head and then the senior management, without discussion or an opportunity to have a rapport with the person who spends most time with the kids"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 2)
- *"Personally, I don't like things that are imposed"* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 8)

Increased control over teachers' work also manifested itself in the intensification of job demands:

- *"There's a lot of general amount of paper that you have to tick and pass around to someone else – there's just too much to do"* (PE teacher: Int one, q 10)

- *"I don't seem to control any support staff – I regularly have to input data into the computer and it's a waste of time really"* (Science HoD: Int one, q 1)[156]

The DHC also highlighted teachers' reduced participation in their professional development as an area of concern (Int one, q 2). Crucially, he pointed to a lack of personal initiative in the job which resulted in a decrease in his levels of job satisfaction:

> *"My job satisfaction is partly what I can make it and I don't think I'm in control of that anymore [..] The IIP [Investors In People] scheme was a way in which I tried to control my job satisfaction and I achieved that – I got a kick out of that. But I'm not going to get much of a kick out of the fact that it's not getting enough space in the discussions which take place in the school"* (DHC: Int one, q 10).

This study's evidence, then, points to the real presence of proletarianization in areas such as, the standardisation of teaching, the diminished opportunity for creative work and reflective thinking, and the deterioration in teacher-teacher relations. Teachers' ability to recognise this loss of control, while apparent, may nevertheless fail to be acute. This is because many of the controls over their work are 'technical' in nature (Apple: 1982a, 1986). Also, while teachers have "socially and pedagogically critical intuitions", they may not be able to use these in practice (Apple, 2000). On a pragmatic level, for example, teachers may be forced to support the technical stress on

---

[156] While the government argues that teachers should not undertake low grade work, it is clear from the above statements that the 'intensification problem' is exacerbated by the inadequate provision of

educational outcomes in order to oversee the interests of their pupils. Of course, in doing so, they may (inadvertedly or otherwise) accept "a limited or licensed" form of professionalism, where they are effectively located as "unequal partners" in a context of "indirect rule" (Lawn and Ozga: 1986, p225).

It is important to note that while the trend towards the proletarianization of teaching remains evident, it does not represent an absolute force. Departing from the more absolute claims of such proletarianization proponents as Apple (1986, 1993), the following discussion now develops this point. In particular, it examines teachers' assertions that certain change aspects may signify *positive features of control*. In this study, for example, it was strongly felt by teachers that a greater imposition of curricular structures (such as National Curriculum guidelines and tighter syllabuses) might be considered as beneficial to their teaching:

> *"There is more control over what we do – it's better than what it was. I don't disagree with change in that direction to be honest. Ten years ago we were very loose in our work and structure now is a better situation"* (Science HoD: Int two, q 2).

The science teacher endorsed this comment by pointing to the fact that teachers (as well as pupils) could now follow the syllabus in a much more ordered and knowledgeable fashion (Int one, q 1: Int two, q 2). This corroborates evidence elsewhere which suggests that the National Curriculum represents less of a constraint and more of a benefit (Helsby, 2000)[157]. Further, some controls over teachers'

---

support resources at ground level.

[157] Woods et al (1997, p12) further note that the National Curriculum was found to be an effective stimulus to collaborative planning, shared professional learning and the development of craft knowledge (Cooper and McIntyre, 1996). Increased professionalism in the areas of assessment was also noted (Gipps et al, 1995).

decision-making input was positively received by a number of respondents. This was rationalised on the grounds that 'the intensification problem' could be alleviated if decisions were made 'elsewhere':

- *"I do all the schemes of work because it is easier for teachers to follow them - I do all the reading and the research and this is beneficial for everyone in the department"* (Maths HoD: Int two, q 2)

- *"I think myself that such control is something which could almost be welcomed – 'tell us what we've got to do next and we'll do a good job'"* (English HoD: Int one, q 4)

While these teachers held this view, they were keen to stress the capacity for individual agency in responding to such decision-making direction:

- "*What I have always insisted upon, however, is the way things are taught is up to them"* (Maths HoD: Int two, q 2)

- *"We might argue with certain bits, but in a way which teachers do – shifting this [..] and taking from it what we think is good"* (English HoD: Int one, q 4)

Such a degree of agency, however, appears less significant, especially when one considers the role of teachers as 'reactive' rather than 'proactive' members in the decision-making process. In this way, one can separate managerialist and collegial priorities since

> *"the significance of the contrast between managerialism and collegiality lies in the place of the teacher as a learner"* (Constable: 1995, p163).

Taking a more collegial stance, the English HoD later admitted that 'leaving teachers in the dark' with regards to workload and decision-making responsibilities was indeed 'misguided':

> *"I feel at times the temptation to take on too many things to protect my staff but I realise that this is misguided because you don't really protect staff - you keep them frustrated and ignorant about things and you also don't protect yourself"* (English HoD: Int two, q 5).

In light of earlier comments by the same respondent, the above quote appears contradictory. Indeed, this remains an intrinsic feature of a *mixed response* to the question of teacher control, as the following discussion reveals.

A mixed response to the question of teacher control manifested itself in a number of ways. In relation to the decision-making input of teachers, for example, some respondents were torn between the desire to be more in control *and* (for the sake of easing the intensification burden) being told what to do. Here, the Deputy SENCO's comments about the introduction of a new literacy programme in the school was particularly poignant:

> *"I said to the Head a couple of times, 'this is all very well, we're all going to meetings and conferences and we're coming back and having a little panic'. There's actually nobody there to say 'now this is what we want you to do, this is what we want you to achieve in your classroom' [..] I'm in favour of a 'do it*

yourself' approach before it is imposed. I would hate the literacy programme to become so formalised" (Deputy SENCO: Int one, q 7).

In relation to increased job demands, too, some teachers appeared contradictory in their responses to the issue of control:

- *"Oh I'm in control – I control what I do – except (and there's always an exception of course) when someone will come up to me and say 'this job has to be done now'"* (Maths HoD: Int one, q 10)

- *"I don't really feel that initiatives have been handed down to me – I feel I develop my own systems [..] I am unhappy though about the amount of time I have to spend on menial tasks which I now have to do to analyse results.."* (Science HoD: Int one, q 2)

Teachers also appeared divided on the worth of exam-focused teaching and, in particular, questioned (from an educational perspective) whether this approach really favoured their pupils:

- *"Theoretically, it develops a better exam result if the pupil specifically studies what's being tested – but whether they develop a better understanding of the subject, I'm not so sure"* (DHC: Int two, q 2)

- *"Certainly you have to do exam-related lessons which, in terms of exam results, is probably a good thing because the more practice the pupils get the better – but it's not always the better way"* (English teacher: Int two, q 2)

As earlier discussions on the effects of increased controls over classroom teaching reveal, teachers like to have a certain degree of flexibility in curriculum delivery. Yet, at the same time, they appreciate tighter structures for reasons relating to the clarity of instructional direction and the development of pupils' 'technical' learning needs. The following quotes reiterate these points and highlight the inherent contradictions therein:

- *"..it has certainly gone that way that teachers are under closer control in the classroom [..] I think that teachers basically like to have more flexibility – they like to be themselves more. On the other hand, I have to say that many people enjoy the security of a tight syllabus"* (History HoD: Int two, q 2)

- *"I think there is a lot more control over what you do and perhaps that helps you because you know where you are going. But the only problem with that is that there is no leeway for those off-the-track lessons – you can't allow the kids to really express themselves fully..."* (PE teacher: Int two, q 2)

- *"I think the reaction is mixed because, on the one hand, teaching is more direct and this can be frustrating if you want to do something related to the topic but not necessarily related to exams – and then you can see this direction as helpful for the future of the kids i.e. getting their exams"*

(Maths teacher: Int two, q 2)

The above discussion, then, brings to light the contradictory nature of teachers' responses when commenting on control issues. This prompts the question: *what can we conclude from such reactions?* In attempting to develop answers to this enquiry, we must firstly recognise that it is not customary for teachers to reflect upon and talk about control issues in an extensive way[158]. In this manner, it may be difficult for individuals to fully comprehend the in-depth effects of changes on their work culture. Also, while the job becomes more and more complex, teachers may increasingly rely on quick-fix routines which they have developed through experience (Brown and McIntyre, 1993). Thus, when presented with a number of dilemmas and competing purposes, teachers may become more instinctive in their practice and less politically critical of imposed aspects of control[159]. In stating this, however, one must not forget the individual's capacity for mediating change. Specifically, whether teachers feel more controlled and more deskilled at work, will largely depend on their own personal/professional attitude to change. To some teachers, for example, changes to their work culture may be seen less in terms of the idiom of 'control' and more in terms of an increase in 'structural regulation' (which may be considered to be 'positive' in places – e.g. English HoD: Int two, q 2). While some proletarianization proponents may view this stance as an expression of teachers' collusion in their own deskilling, they may fail to recognise that these teachers actively mediate change in some way and consciously extract those aspects which appear agreeable in practice. While this activity may be limited, it nevertheless emphasises the energy of individual agency.

---

[158] The intensification of teachers' work, too, does not bode well for such reflective practice.
[159]On this point, a recent TES survey of some 501 state and independent teachers revealed that their support for any political party had little to do with actual educational policies (TES: January 12, 2001).

Thus, while the concept of 'professionalism' may be used by managerialism as a means of controlling teachers, it can also be used by teachers to maintain and/or regain some control over their work (Smyth et al, 2000). In this way,

> *"..professionalism is not an objective concept. It is a social construction that has been used at different times as a form of ideological control, and as a weapon of teacher resistance"* (ibid., p45).

By locating the concept of teacher professionalism in context, and specifically in policy context (Ozga: 1995, Hoyle and John: 1995), we may begin to recognise that there is indeed a strong trend towards the proletarianization of teaching. While increased controls over teachers' work culture are evident, this is not to say however that they are absolute. This is because the deskilling process doesn't just depend on the individual's capacity for mediation, but is also reliant (to a large extent) on the school's cultural response to change. Hence, the extent to which deskilling occurs is significantly dependent on the way in which senior staff run a school and on their approval (or otherwise) of the managerialist direction for reform (Ozga: 1995, Busher and Saran: 1995).

In responding to the question 'are teachers in control of their own work?', then, one may conclude that, in spite of the strong tendency towards diminished control, a more careful solution lies with considering the outcomes of "the interplay between structure, agency and culture" (Helsby: 2000, p 95). In recognising this fact, one simultaneously acknowledges that teachers' perceptions of change are an important (though, under-represented) source of enquiry in the deskilling debate (Day, 2000).

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some important features which remain central to the new conception of a teacher 'professional'. This professional model is shown to be instrumental in shaping the expectations, responsibilities and development of teachers' work. It is also influential in advancing a so-called 'proletarianization' process in teaching. The strong tendency towards this position leads one to question whether, from a teacher professionalism perspective, we are in fact 'getting it right'. Teachers' own views are essential in illuminating this problem. Accordingly, as highlighted in this chapter, we need to be mindful of their perceptions of the negative effects of the 'raising standards' agenda on notions of self-identity, working practice and social relations in the job. Much of their concerns given here may be said to represent the 'professional cost' of pursuing 'official' guidelines on practice.

In stating this, we must also be mindful that while teachers (in conjunction with school cultural factors) retain some capacity for mediating change, 'official' conceptions of teacher professionalism will always be contested. The following chapter develops from this point. Specifically, it attempts to establish how teachers' personal/professional critique of change remains active in exposing 'official' 'raising standards' claims as being illusory.

Chapter Nine: The 'Unreality' of the 'Raising Standards' Agenda

"Our experiences are mere shadows of perfect ideas" – Plato

Introduction

Before setting out the purpose and design of this chapter, it seems appropriate at the outset to explicate its curious title. The reader may recall from chapter Four that the concept of 'unreality' has already been introduced in an analysis of current transformations in teachers' work culture. This 'unreality' phenomenon was shown to derive, in large part, from the pervasive gap between utopian and tangible 'raising standards' claims. In utilising the concept of 'unreality' in this study, it is not suggested "that there is a reality 'out there' which we can all see if we simply look at it in the *right* way" (Fairclough: 2000, p155 – my emphasis)[160]. 'Reality' can be 'disguised by discourse' (Fairclough, 2000), obscured as a 'myth' (Hughes and Tight, 1995), or constructed as an 'ideological distortion of the truth' (Strain and Field, 1997). Indeed, there may be multiple representations of 'reality'. This is not to deny, however, the existence of 'something real' which endures separately from such representations (Fairclough, 2000). It is claimed here that while these different representations profess to signify this 'something', they remain simultaneously exposed to critical scrutiny. Accordingly, notions such as 'vision' and 'myth' may be separated from those of 'actuality' and 'substance'.

---

[160] This quote originally refers to Fairclough's analysis of a gap between *rhetoric* and 'reality'.

This chapter follows on from this conviction, as it sets out to disclose the 'unreality' of the 'raising standards' agenda. Section One begins by highlighting three significant themes which exhibit this 'unreality' phenomenon. The first of these questions the substantial claims of the *raising standards for all* assumption. The second considers the gap between *theory and practice* in relation to the arrangement and functioning of 'raising standards' initiatives in school. Finally, the concept of *image management* is explored which highlights the perceived pressure for schools and teachers to 'act outside themselves' in responding (favourably) to the 'raising standards' agenda.

It is claimed in this study that teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda will be duly affected by this 'unreality' phenomenon. The implicit assumption within this claim is that teachers have the capacity to adjudge (at least to a significant degree) whether certain aspects of the 'raising standards' agenda appear to be more illusory than assured. Their ability to perceive (though not, necessarily, fully articulate) the emergence of this 'unreality' to their work is confirmed by their personal/professional mediation of change. In conjunction with chapter Four's analysis, then, section Two explores this agency issue in further depth. Specifically, it examines teachers' personal/professional attitudes to change and the extent to which they actually assimilate new working practices.

Section One: The 'unreality' of teachers' work

Raising standards for all?

As highlighted in chapter Four, 'raising standards' (within the current educational climate) is taken to mean raising *academic* standards. This appears to be the overriding concern in schools. At Lee Valley, for example, it was widely accepted by teachers that, in the words of the history HoD, "the reality boils down to the academic" (Int two, q 3). While such a narrow 'raising standards' focus was not considered by most teachers as wholly disagreeable (see last chapter), serious questions remained over whether or not this focus actually reflected the 'reality' of teaching. Specifically, teachers questioned this 'raising standards' direction on the grounds of a) its so-called 'inclusive' agenda and b) its claims of improving the quality of teaching and learning (DfEE, 1997a). The following discussions now centre on exposing a sense of 'unreality' inherent within both these hypotheses.

Taking the first of these, it is claimed here that the 'raising standards' agenda (by definition and purpose, and contrary to its 'official' representation) follows a more *non-inclusive programme*. Teachers in this study (inadvertedly or otherwise) acknowledged the substance of this claim. In terms of focus, for example, they recognised the sublimation of the 'academic' over 'other' standards (such as, pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and social skills development) which they held as consistently central to their practice. Many teachers thought such 'standards' to be largely under-valued in school, especially as 'official' measures of 'success':

- *"In my special needs class I would enjoy great success if we all sat down, no-one has abused anyone else, and we've all got on with something - you can't measure that in academic terms"* (Deputy SENCO: Int two, q 2)
- *"As a Head of Year, 'raising standards' involves a number of issues. I have to look at it and say: what does it mean? - does it mean raising standards of behaviour, attendance, personal/social development?"* (HoY 8/9: Int one, q 2)
- *"I think what's wrong with the 'raising standards' agenda is that it is only viewed in terms of assessment results. We've got to stand up and be counted when we talk about a pupil's social improvement and social skills"* (DHC: Int two, q 1)

The above comments point to teachers' real concerns that the needs of lower ability pupils (in particular) are not well served by a narrow 'academic' focus. On this point, they spoke of the highly specialised support which these pupils required[161], as well as the obligation to involve them more in the 'raising standards' design:

- *"Lower ability pupils don't necessarily relate to the whole 'raising standards' business anyway. It's not part of their mental framework and that, to me, is part of the problem. You put all the pressure on these kids to perform and it doesn't affect them one bit.."* (History HoD: Int two, q 1)
- *"Some of the time maybe it's a confidence trick that's tempting those lower ability pupils to believe that it's not impossible to get a grade up to a C providing they work hard, do all the right things etc. In one's heart of*

[161] The Headteacher, for example, commented that these pupils required far more attention and motivation than other children in school (Int Two, q 1).

hearts one may feel they haven't a chance but one tries to sell the possibility.." (English HoD: Int two, q 1)

The exclusion of lower ability pupils from the 'raising standards' agenda was shown to be exacerbated by the school's policy of concentrating on C/D 'borderline' candidates. According to most teachers, this policy appeared to undermine the principle of 'inclusiveness' and the achievements (albeit modest, in 'academic' terms) of those less able pupils:

- *"If you're always focusing on higher ability pupils and the C/D borders, pupils are aware of that focus and I think you've got to make sure that you're trying to raise everybody's standards"* (PE teacher: Int two, q 1)
- *"Well I think we've got to try and say raising standards is important but it's raising standards for everyone, not just this magic boundary which is statistically significant and reverberates to the school's good name"* (English HoD: Int one, q 2)
- *"It's a huge achievement for some pupils (especially if they come from special needs) to get a D and that should be recognised"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 2)

Failure to consider different notions of 'standards' and the needs and achievements of lower ability pupils thus deprives the 'raising standards' agenda of a wider sociological perspective (see chapter Two). This asociological approach to 'raising standards' only adds to teachers' concerns that the demands made upon them often fail to reflect the 'reality' of their work. The exam culture, for example, in its attempts to standardise

academic achievements, crucially overlooks the varying attitudes and academic abilities of pupils in school:

- *"You want to do the best for the pupils and you make sure you do, but if the kid doesn't respond what can you do? - you can't really do the work for them"* (PE teacher: Int two, q 2)

- *"What might happen this year is that I'll get maybe 150 out of 300 doing history in Year 10. Now that may be 'a top slice' - it may be the smart girls (because girls like history), then again it may be the boys who are not particularly good at geography or drama [..] People may then remark 'isn't history a good department because they get good results' - but what they may not realise is that I've had 'a top slice'..."* (History HoD: Int one, q 2)

Other representative features of pupil groups (including class size, as well as socio-economic and social class status), too, were perceived to be overlooked when comparing 'success levels' across different year cohorts:

- *"Most of us think 'we haven't got the same kids, we haven't got the same resources, we haven't got the same class sizes'"* (Maths teacher: Int one, q 5)

- *"Social mixes do make a difference to results - some reasons are unexplainable [..] and you think 'that year is awful', but you don't know why"* (English teacher: Int two, q 1)

Such a 'comparative culture' also extended to a cross-analysis of different subject departments based upon their relative exam performances. While this practice

appeared to exhibit "some logic in it" (English HoD: Int one, q 2), teachers (on balance) considered it to be flawed:

- *"What I expect of my class may not correspond with what they are doing in maths or English or any other subject - attainment scores do give you an overview obviously but I certainly don't use them as a basis for creating a profile of a child's performance - in languages it's obviously a very different thing, isn't it?"* (Languages teacher: Int one, q 1)
- *"You can't always compare. I buy into the scientific explanation that different parts of the brain make connections with the subject, the pace of learning, and that the cognitive ability of an individual is developed through different experiences"* (Science HoD: Int one, q 4)

It seemed clear, then, that while such comparative practices claimed to represent an 'inclusive' agenda, in reality they were inclined to secure 'systemic inequities' than actually remedy them (Paquette: 1998, p46).

The second hypothesis ('that the 'raising standards' agenda has lead to improvements in both the quality of teaching and learning') was also questioned by teachers. Referring to the quality of teaching firstly, a large number of respondents spoke of their concerns that the notion of 'teacher effectiveness' was too narrowly concentrated on levels of academic 'outcomes'. This concern reflected their own recognition of different 'standards' and the complementary personal/professional belief that "there are several kinds of good teachers" (Waller: 1965, p410):

- *"Exam results should not be everything when considering how effective a teacher is"* (English Teacher: Int two, q 4)

- *".. we all know exam results are not necessarily just dependent on the efforts of the teacher or his/her qualities – there are many variables"*

  (English HoD: Int two, q 4)

Further, as pointed out by the Headteacher and the DHC, this ambiguity over the criteria for 'teacher effectiveness' rendered new assessment proposals as problematical[162]:

- *"If Ofsted tell us that over 90% of lessons were 'satisfactory and above', how can I fit that into the performance management structure of the school? What's the criteria for assessing teachers' performance? It's not that I'm saying that it's wrong to assess [..] what I'm concerned about is the way it's being implemented"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 4)
- *"Within the new Ofsted framework there are several things which are set down on what makes a good lesson. For instance, I'm told that any one of those things that isn't present in the lesson is regarded as being 'unsatisfactory'. I think you've got to make an attempt to rate a teacher by what's going on in the classroom – the exam results are a product of that but there are too many factors which a teacher cannot control"*

  (DHC: Int two, q 4)

In relation to the proposition that 'raising standards' has lead to improvements in pupils' learning, teachers were divided in their responses[163]. As chapter Eight points

---

[162] Section Two takes up this issue further by commenting on teachers' personal/professional critique of the PRP scheme.

[163] It was acknowledged that teachers found it difficult to respond to this issue in a comprehensive manner. The object of the enquiry, therefore, was to try to get a *sense* of how learning had been

out, pupils were perceived to have benefited and suffered (at one and the same time) from a more structured approach to their learning. Pupils' sense of learning independence, too, seemed to have been enhanced and diminished at the same time, though the argument here was one of degree. There were those, for example, who believed that, overall, pupils had become more independent in their learning. All of these teachers specifically mentioned the role of IT (Information Technology) in furnishing the opportunity for independent work[164]. The prospect of attending extra revision classes, too, was seen as a means of enhancing independence in learning. This outlook, however, appeared to be contradictory:

> *"I think pupils are more independent now – for example, pupils are now **having to attend this revision course in Easter, they're having to come to** extra classes, they're much more involved in their revision as well as coursework.."* (Maths HoD: Int two, q 6 – my emphases).

The above quote thus points (paradoxically) to the proposition that learning is seen as something which 'is done to' pupils (Levin, 1993)[165].

On balance, most of the teachers felt that pupils had become more dependent in their learning. The following quotes illustrate this viewpoint well:

- *"If we're talking about GCSE, I have to say basically that we do the thinking for them.."* (History HoD: Int two, q 6)

---

affected by the 'raising standards' agenda. A more in-depth investigation naturally lies beyond the scope of this study.

[164] It should be noted that these teachers exclusively associated 'independent learning' with the notion of pupils working individually with computers. There was thus no sense of critique on their part of the ways in which pupils purposely used this technology, or of the limitations of the computer as an instructional medium.

[165] The contradictory nature of this quote is further affirmed by this respondent's earlier comments that 'cramming' now appears to be far more prevalent in school (Int Two, q 7).

- *"I would like to see pupils develop more independence in school with less reliance on teacher-led activity and us having to make sure that the work is done"* (Science HoD: Int two, q 6)
- *"I do feel that pupils are very dependent but that's maybe because we have made it that way because we have said: 'this is the syllabus, this is the path, this is the way forward.."* (Languages Teacher: Int two, q 6)

These sentiments reveal the prevalence of a certain 'schooling condition' which promotes the merits of 'teacher-led' instruction and diffuses a 'culture of passivity' among pupils. In pedagogical terms, pupils *receive* a 'technical' form of knowledge, where such knowledge (as highlighted in chapter Three) is characterised as 'self-complete' since it ranges "between an identifiable point [..] and an identifiable terminal point.." (Oakeshott: 1967, p11). Within this 'learning' approach, pupil dependency may not, however, be necessarily viewed upon in absolute negative terms:

- *"I still think that some kids will struggle if you don't 'spoon-feed' them. That's my experience – they just won't do the work if you don't push them"* (HoY 10/11: Int two, q 6)
- *"..if there is a distillation of exam wisdom it would almost be folly perhaps for a student to go his [sic] own independent way. Maybe necessarily (with an exam at the end), the independence of learning is not the most efficient way to get the best results"* (English HoD: Int two, q 6)

Theory versus practice

As mentioned in chapter Four, teaching is characterised by contradiction. The desire to develop pupil independence in the learning process, for example, operates alongside pressures to get pupils 'through the exams'. Further, the moral/professional obligation towards a 'raising standards for *all*' objective is compromised by the urgency to concentrate on a certain section of the pupil population. These cases highlight the fact that 'official' job expectations often signify conceptual ideals which lie in tension with the more grounded practical experiences of teachers. The following discussion now draws on this disparity between *theory and practice* with specific reference to the arrangement and functioning of 'raising standards' initiatives in school.

As chapter Seven highlighted, teachers must increasingly prioritise their workload in school. This is not just a response to the 'intensification problem', but also reflects the perceived urgency to attend to new job demands. Often these take precedence over existing (more routine) tasks and the consequent realignment of job priorities means that some are given a higher value position than others. Blackmore et al (1996, p9), for example, point to evidence which suggests that work in the classroom is seen as less valued than the wider managerial commitments which teachers undertake in school. Teachers in Lee Valley, too, pointed to the concern that some other fundamental (and often, routine) aspects of their job were being under-valued. One teacher, for example, mentioned that there was "not a lot of appreciation" on the part of the SMT for the staff's 'ordinary' work practices (Anon teacher: Int one, q 9). To illustrate, she spoke of her disappointment at a recent Open Evening event where her efforts to prepare faculty rooms for presentation had gone unnoticed. Another teacher

commented that the time and effort invested in discipline matters, too, had been under-appreciated because of 'commitments elsewhere' in the school:

> *"It could well be that discipline and the 'grittiness' of the job lie in the shadow of expectations of success and target setting.."* (Anon teacher: Int two, q 7).

Furthermore, another teacher spoke about a certain 'lack of priority' in dealing with fundamental matters such as the drug and litter problems in school (Anon teacher: Int two, q 7). Though policies were drawn up to 'officially' deal with these issues, this teacher found that, in practice, such problems still prevailed.

While teachers found it problematic to prioritise their work (see chapter Seven), their difficulty in the job was exacerbated by the continual emphasis on 'ideal goals' (Lortie, 1975). Specifically, in relation to the application of 'raising standards' initiatives, some job demands appeared more unfeasible than possible. To illustrate this point, a number of teachers highlighted how the pupil mentoring scheme (while considered worthy, in theory) nevertheless obscured the difficulties of its own claims. In practice, for example, teachers experienced many problems in finding adequate time to meet with their pupils. Further, they questioned the real 'added value' of this scheme since it was felt that pupils already received the same kinds of support via the pastoral school network. The practical organisation and usage of other policies too was questioned, including: the integration of IT across the school curriculum, the impact assessment of professional development training on teachers' practice, and the enlargement of a comprehensive teacher appraisal scheme in school.

Certain demands made upon *pupils* likewise were considered by teachers to be impractical. In terms of academic expectations, for example, many teachers commented on the 'impossible' exam targets set by the HRS project:

- *"We've moved away from some of these HRS targets [..]. It's maybe a realisation that some of those targets are ridiculous and it's ridiculous to set yourself targets that pupils are not going to reach.."* (English teacher: Int one, q 3)
- *"We've modified our HRS targets totally because we realised how absurd they are. How are we going to get a 75% A-C pass rate? We're never going to get that unless we select"* (DHC: Int one, q 8)

The expectation that pupils should make year-on-year improvements was also challenged. While teachers were keen to emphasise that having high pupil expectations was a positive feature of teaching, they were equally resolute in stating that such expectations should be set in a realistic format:

- *"It's hard really to improve year-on-year [..] you've got to expect results to fluctuate a bit for all sorts of reasons. I just can't believe that children are expected to go on getting better and better"* (Science teacher: Int one, q 10)
- *"I suspect that the pupil cohorts you've got in any one year will reach a saturation point in performance [..] I think we're getting close to that point now"* (Science HoD: Int one, q 2)

Teachers' realistic expectations were thus aimed at making the appropriate level of demands for their pupils (Kyriacou, 1986). Concerns about the probability of reaching

a 'ceiling' in exam performance stood in stark contrast however with New Labour's own value position:

> *"One of the most powerful underlying reasons for low performance in our schools has been low expectations which have allowed poor quality teaching to continue unchallenged. Too many teachers, parents and pupils have come to accept a ceiling on achievement which is far below what is possible"* (DfEE: 1997a, paragraph 3)

This last point highlights the fact that policy-makers often lack sufficient knowledge about the realities of school life (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The way they view change too contrasts with most teachers' standpoint (A Hargreaves, 1994a). From the latter perspective, for example, Jackson (1968) notes that uncertainty and surprise are seen as "natural features of the environment". Further, and in contrast to the views of policy-makers, teachers tend to identify the path of educational progress as something which "more closely resembles the flight of a butterfly than the flight of a bullet" (both quotes, p166). In this study, the Headteacher expressed his anxiety about such a pervasive *gap in thinking* between policy makers and practitioners:

> *"I feel that there's now a civil service view of change that dictates what should happen without appreciating what actually does take place in schools. There's that credibility gap which is a great concern"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 4).

For most teachers in this study, it's interesting (though, perhaps unsurprising) to note that this 'credibility gap' manifested itself more intimately in the contrast between their views on schooling and those of the *SMT*. This substantiates recent research findings

which suggest the emergence of an increased division of values between teachers and senior managers (Bowe and Ball: 1992, Helsby: 1999, Simkins, 2000).

From the teachers' perspective, this 'division of values' manifested itself in two significant ways. Firstly, there was a sense that the SMT was more concerned with the presentation of policy than with its application[166]:

> *"Often 'raising standards' policies represent forms of Churchillian speeches by figure heads [..] they're not actually dealing with cornerstone practice"* (Anon HoD: Int two, q 5).

Secondly, there was a strong feeling that the SMT was somewhat removed from the implementation stages of policy:

- *"I think it's the old problem where people who are forming policy don't necessarily have to carry it out themselves [..] If you have no experience of how they work in practice, you won't know how they can be improved. If those that formulate don't come across problems in their day-to-day working week, then they're not going to oversee arrangements"* (Anon teacher: Int two, q 5)
- *"We've got a few senior members of staff where I think people look at them and ask 'what are you doing for your money?' It's people like myself (ordinary teachers) who are dealing with it day after day - that's the problem, there are too many administrators in school.."* (Anon teacher: Int two, q 5)

[166] Some teachers specifically singled out the Headteacher for attention, referring to him as an 'impression person' who appeared more interested in the presentational *image* of good practice.

- *"There is a general feeling, I think, that that the SMT don't have to go and do it"* (Anon teacher: Int two, q 5)

While this division of values appeared to prevail in practice, it certainly wasn't alluded to from an 'official' school perspective. Here, the notion of 'organisational solidarity' was promoted over any demonstration of a fragmentation in relations[167].

At the political and school levels, teachers' increased decision-making capacity too was alluded to from an 'official' perspective. This is despite the emergence of contrary evidence. Ball (1994a), for example, points to the fact that teachers have little input into the policy-making process. At the organisational level, too, there is no sense of increased decision-making participation of teachers (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998)[168]. Indeed, as the hierarchical power structure in schools is reinforced (Jephcote et al, 1996), there is evidence to suggest that significant collegial decision-making exists more at the level of senior managers (Hall and Southworth: 1997)[169]. The decision-making process too is often presented in a more hurried, 'non-consultative' or 'pseudo consultative' form (Gerwitz et al: 1995, p97). Further, from a gender perspective, traditionally masculine values "such as efficiency, objectivity and instrumentality" may be encouraged at the expense of genuinely collaborative principles (Helsby: 1999, p134). These points thus indicate the suppression of one mode of collegiality which places the teacher at the centre of its focus (Busher and

---

[167] This appears to mirror the state's own mode of self-presentation which continually emphasises a "political and dialogical" role over its "overwhelmingly managerial and promotional" substance (Fairclough: 2000, p124).

[168] It is not claimed here that there was a previous 'golden age' of collegiality. Rather, as Simkins (2000, p317) notes, what is being experienced "is a complex and dynamic process of adjustment between old and new organisational and managerial forms".

[169] In highlighting the increased power and decision-making capacity of SMTs, Webb and Vulliamy (1996) describe these groups of senior managers as a 'species of cabinet' or a restricted form of 'headquarters staff'.

Saran, 1995) in favour of another more 'contrived' form which "binds teachers in time and space to purposes and procedures devised by their superiors" (A Hargreaves: 1992b, p234).

Image Management

As outlined in chapter Four, schools are increasingly compelled to 'positively' project themselves for the competitive market. School plans, brochures, and general text production not only serve to shape the internal organisation of the school, but also act as 'legitimating practices' in producing a positive public image (Clarke and Newman, 1997). At Lee Valley, senior managers (particularly, the Headteacher) believed that 'outside impression' was "certainly strong" (Headteacher: Int two, q 1). Teachers, too, recognised the import of the school's positive public image, though their personal/professional identification with this agenda was not as sharp. Here, teachers saw the need (though, not always the value) of producing impression documents or 'glossies' (Deputy SENCO: Int two, q 8). At departmental level, they also recognised the perceived necessity to use certain exam boards as a means of boosting performance figures. Overall, there was a general appreciation that the school had to be seen (by 'officials', parents, and pupils) as a 'successful' organisation:

> *"It doesn't matter how good a school you are - if you don't have the points at the end of the day, it means that you are not going to be recognised"* (PE teacher: Int one, q 3).

The role of Ofsted was especially mentioned by all teachers in connection with the school's need for an effective self-presentation. The Headteacher, for example, welcomed the inspection process as a means of 'officially' confirming the school's valuable status in the community. In line with the desire to assist in this validation process, most teachers commented on their obligation to verify an open commitment to 'official' ideas of good practice (Power, 1997). Throughout the inspection process, for example, they admitted to having actively engaged in a form of 'ritualised performance' in their teaching (S Robertson, 1999). This 'stage management', to use Case et al's (2000) phrase, was expressly designed to meet with the approval of inspectors. At the same time, however, it demonstrated a transformation in teachers' way of thinking about their work. Thus, as Woods et al (1997, p124) note, there emerged:

> *"a shift from seeing oneself through one's own perspectives and seeing oneself through Ofsted eyes – a technification of self"*[170].

This last point highlights the fact that teachers are obliged to demonstrate an increasing concern for how they are perceived at work. As chapter Four proposed, this is tantamount to incorporating a certain form of 'image management' within their practice. In line with pressures to conform to the new conception of a teacher 'professional' (see chapter Eight), this often means that teachers must show an increasing awareness for "how one thinks *others* think one should behave" (Pheysey: 1993, her emphasis). Within this study, teachers clearly demonstrated this awareness.

---

[170] It remains a moot point, however, whether such a transformation endures (to a significant degree) subsequent to the inspection process – the following discussions here and in section Two may help shed some light on this debate.

In response to the perceived need to "compete in the managerial career stakes" (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p74), for example, they were conscious of *being seen* to be doing their work and to be 'busy' at all times:

- *"We have to go through the schemes of work to be seen to be doing it, to be seen to be fulfilling the statutory requirements"* (History HoD: Int two, q 2)
- *"You are almost afraid to stop and talk about something else instead of 'standards'"* (HoY 8/9: Int one, q 6)

They were also consciously aware of *being committed* to the organisation's goals. In crude academic terms, this often meant "not wanting to be the one who has got the worst results in the department" (Languages teacher: Int two, q 1). Further, there was some evidence of teachers adopting an 'ingratiative culture' (Jackson: 1968, D Hargreaves: 1995) whereby they knowingly appeared as non-conflictual in their dealings with senior managers:

- *"I prioritise and right now the academic is number one - I have to follow the party line in my engagement with the SMT and talk about the results etc. The image of the department is important"* (History HoD: Int two, q 5)
- *"Sometimes I have to be careful about what I say. I'm aware that if I say certain things, then it can cause problems - so I don't"* (Anon HoD: Int one, q 6)

Of course the idea of 'image management' is not something new in teachers' practice. This is because the act of teaching itself (to some extent) is always set in a ritual

appearance of 'unreality' (see chapter Four)[171]. Thus, as Ball and Goodson (1985) note, teachers are often aware of the 'dichotomy of self' whether this be in relation to their dealings with pupils (eg. feigning anger in class) or, as I would add, with senior managers (e.g. simulating accepted notions of good practice). What appears then is a clear separation between the 'public' and 'private' self in teachers' cultural work. In the case where values held within one component are so dissonant with those of another, there may develop

> *"an internalised belief that what you say and what you do can operate as two separate systems"* (MacBeath: 1997, p5).

It is possible, therefore, that *public* expressions of full support for the 'raising standards' agenda may actually be met by *private* reservations thus setting up, what Menter et al (1995) term, 'a stressful ambivalence'. The following section now develops from this suggestion and asks: *to what extent do teachers assimilate 'unreal' job demands?*

Section Two: Assimilating 'unreal' job demands?

It is claimed in this study that teachers have the capacity to adjudge (at least to a significant degree) whether changes to their work culture appear to be more illusory than assured. The extent to which they can actually mediate these 'unreal' job demands, however, remains unresolved. Certainly, their capacity for mediation depends largely on the substantial (though, not exclusive) influence of, what I call,

---

[171] It is argued here (and in chapter Four), however, that the analysis presented points to the *proliferation* of 'unreal' aspects of teaching. It is also claimed that these 'unreal' aspects comprise of *new* organisational and managerial demands on teachers' practice.

personal/professional factors. This section now explicates some of those factors which affect how teachers in the sample group perceive and respond to change. Subsequently, the extent to which teachers actually assimilate 'unreal' practice is then explored.

As chapter Two notes, the rhetorical invincibility of the 'raising standards' message is such that it receives little opposition (at least 'officially') from parents, teachers and other members of society. It seems difficult to imagine, for example, that teachers would be opposed to the view that 'good teachers using the most effective methods are the key to standards' (DfEE: 1997a, p1). However, as Welch and Mahony (2000, p143) add,

> *"such consensus probably ends at this point [..], for as soon as notions such as 'good teachers', 'effective methods' or 'higher standards' are defined, different viewpoints will emerge about the purposes, priorities and desirable ends of schooling and the best means of achieving them".*

Likewise, while teachers in this study were at pains to support the 'raising standards' agenda in principle, they were evenly keen to point out their own 'purposes, priorities and desirable ends' for its meaning, policy and practice. Within this subjective dimension, teachers' definitions of 'career', 'job satisfaction', 'standards', and (in a general sense) 'professionalism' are thus developed (e.g. McLaughlin and Yee, 1988). The ways in which teachers see and respond to change, then, remain significantly influenced by their own reflective *internalisation* of events.

This internalisation process was evident throughout this empirical study. The English HoD, for example, commented that he was "not personally hugely in sympathy with

the target setting culture" (Int one, q 3). Other teachers (most notably, the English HoD, the HoY 8/9, and the PE and maths teachers) wished to emphasise that they believed in a more humanistic/vocational perspective on education, and were thus personally/professionally 'uncomfortable' with current trends towards a narrow technical focus. The issue of personal/professional control over one's work, too, was another important factor as teachers considered their individualised reaction to change (see chapter Eight)[172]. In the case of the Headteacher, however, it was interesting to note that he felt that his personal/professional beliefs had to be almost set aside when acting in response to change demands:

> *"I have been pushed in a certain direction because the role of headship has changed - it's not that I agree with it (that's almost irrelevant) - but if I sit back and dig my heels in and stand on the soap box and shout out my principles (mine were trampled on in the eighties), the school and, more importantly, the children will suffer".*(Headteacher: Int one, q 1).

The above quote highlights that despite credible reservations on the part of senior managers, by and large they often support imposed reform distinct from their classroom teacher colleagues (Hargreaves and Evans, 1997). This is consistent with the perceived pressure of having to present change in a positive light and assume a high profile lead in its operation[173]. Hence, the managerial status of teachers was seen as an important factor in determining change responses.

---

[172] Teachers' desire to develop their own individual style in the job, for example, may conflict with a system of occupational control which actively seeks to construct the 'average', 'standard British' practitioner (TES: Oct 20, 2000).

[173] It is perhaps unsurprising to note then that much of the Headteacher's 'official' views on change resonated well with New Labour's stance on school reform.

The degree of cultural support teachers received in meeting new job demands was also shown to be significant. Principally, teachers pointed to the value of this support at departmental level. However, due to the proliferation of job tasks and new changes in social relations in the workplace (see chapters Seven and Eight), such support appeared to be under strain. Hence, there was a strong indication that teachers were largely working alone in school. In addition, they appeared to be faced with more individual decisions about how to organise and manage their work. In prioritising workload demands, for example, they often had to choose *between* classroom and managerial responsibilities. Thus, the languages teacher commented that she now had "taken on about as much as [she'd] like to" regarding 'extra' managerial duties (Int two, q 8). Likewise, the science teacher commented that she couldn't possibly get involved in every aspect of change:

> *"It's not that I wouldn't like to be involved [..], I would love to be. But physically you're quite drained by it. It's like lunchtime clubs, I stay clear of that"* (Science teacher: Int one, q 10).

The different stages and breadth of professional experiences indicated another important factor in affecting teachers' responses to change. It was suggested, for example, that NQTs, whilst always pre-occupied by a sense of personal 'survival' (History HoD: Int two, q 7), were nevertheless more aware of contemporary job demands:

> *"The teachers arriving to school now tend to think more about achievement and statistics. As you're new to the profession, you're being trained in the latest government schemes and that's in the foreground"* (PE teacher: Int two, q 7).

While there was no evidence to suggest that younger teachers in this study were more receptive to reform than their older more experienced colleagues, the latter (understandably, perhaps) did appear to be more concerned about the challenging and problematic features of change[174]. Specifically, these teachers pointed to problems with the new concentration of job tasks 'outside' the classroom, as well as the cyclical and incessant nature of change:

- *"I've been teaching ten years now and during that time it has changed a lot. I just find it getting a bit harder each year to be honest – not the actual standing in the classroom but everything else that goes with it"* (Languages teacher: Int two, q 7)
- *"..some of the older members of staff have got a little bit of a jaundiced view about teaching [..] because we have seen all this at least once before. I taught phonics when I first started teaching. I had my second child (she's twenty-three now) and I had a couple of years off. When I came back phonics had gone, and now it's back again!"* (Deputy SENCO: Int two, q 7)
- *"I think we just keep moving the same pieces and some pieces move out of site on the chess board and then reappear at a later stage - repackaged, but they all amount to the same thing"* (Headteacher: Int one, q 3)

Matters relating to 'self' (i.e. the very essence of who teachers *are* as individuals) form a central role in shaping personal/professional responses to change. The unique

[174] One notable exception was recorded here in the form of the HoD (maths) who mentioned that, as 'a projects man', he was personally 'comfortable' with change (Int two, q 7).

capacity to cope with work pressure, for example, is significant in this respect. This becomes paramount, especially considering that some individuals are under greater pressure than others in school (particularly, as a consequence of comparative judgements on their 'effectiveness'). The varying levels of 'conscientiousness' (Campbell and Neill, 1994a) and 'guilt' (A Hargreaves, 1992b) which teachers feel in the job may also be shown to affect their responses to change. In addition, the extent to which one feels 'valued' within the organisation appears important. On this point, the maths teacher approvingly noted the school's recent acknowledgement of her efforts when she was offered early promotion (Int two, q 4). While this teacher's private 'value status' had been enhanced, the opposite applied to another colleague who viewed promotion as something which was overlooked in her own subject department (Anon teacher: Int two, q 3)[175]. Teachers' degree of confidence in the job, too, was shown to be highly influential in determining their responses to change (Helsby, 1999). Thus, for example, the Deputy SENCO spoke assuredly about 'knowing that' she was an effective teacher (Int one, q 4), while the English teacher commented on the need to be 'secure about what you're doing' and to 'trust in your own ability' (Int one: q 4, q 7).

The above list of personal/professional factors, while not exhaustive[176], nevertheless points to the fact that teachers' responses to the 'raising standards' agenda are likely to be invariably mixed. This inevitably draws into question the 'rationalistic mindset' (Coleman, 1995) of organised systems which presupposes (often, 'positively') the attitudes and acts of individuals in periods of change. By way of combating this

---

[175] This teacher suggested that the main reason for this was due to her own subject's perceived low status in the curriculum.

presupposition, and in particular the implicit assumption that teachers are responding favourably to every aspect of the 'raising standards' agenda, the following discussion now examines the extent to which teachers in this study actually assimilate 'unreal' job demands.

It is clear that while teachers retain some agency, the structural constraints on their work are such that they are increasingly compelled to assimilate new practices. Accordingly, teachers in this study felt that they had to 'do what was required of them' in the job:

- *"If teachers are given government initiatives then they've got to happen.."* (Headteacher: Int one, q 3)
- *"I think if the government wants us to do these then we've got to do them – I'm not one who opposes change"* (Science teacher: Int one, q 10)
- *"I think teachers are professional and will do what's asked of them"* (Science teacher: Int two, q 1)

From the science teacher's comments above, as well as the views of the PE teacher (Int one, q 8), it's interesting to note that a full commitment to change was seen in terms of a personal/professional desire to enhance one's 'self'. The HoD (maths) too had a similar viewpoint (Int one, q 2, q 3), though he was keen to add that pupils also benefited positively (at least in a 'technical' learning sense - Int two, q 3). Further, in line with his high profile role in effecting change, the Headteacher saw his own personal/professional commitment as crucial. This was largely borne out of a strong desire to be seen to be adhering to the state's 'progressive' educational agenda:

---

[176] Not included in this list, for example, are discussions relating to teachers' varying levels of: 'political awareness', 'gender' attitudes, and personal/professional dispositions towards the notion of

> *"If I question too much a statutory requirement I might be branded a force of conservatism – this branding seems to be the 'in-thing' if you don't necessarily agree with educational policy at the moment"* (Headteacher: Int two, q 5).

The above point indicates that the extent of teachers' assimilation of new practices remains appreciably contingent upon their role (and often, *image* role) contribution to the restructuring of occupational culture. At times (perhaps, naturally), teachers felt somewhat self-protective over this role function as they often stressed the more positive features of change. The DHC, for example, commented that he would be personally 'disappointed' if teachers felt that change had been imposed in school (Int two, q 5)[177]. Likewise, the HoY 8/9 commented (rather idealistically) on the innovative role of pastoral heads in delivering new 'raising standards' policies (Int two, q 5), while the science teacher noted her 'good position' in evaluating the impact of such programmes (Int two, q 5).

The assimilation of new work practices was thus partly due to teachers' perceived obligation to 'do what was required of them'[178] and partly to do with their belief that their personal/professional 'self' had been enhanced along the way. Since teachers as a group remain generally conservative by nature and often appear (at least 'officially') as uncritical subjects of policy (Densmore, 1987), such an assimilation process is likely to prevail (at least to some degree). This is likely to manifest itself, however, less in

---

'career advancement'.

[177] As a point of contradiction, the DHC mentioned elsewhere that the imposition of change (from 'without' and 'within') had become a regular feature of contemporary schooling (Int one, q 8). He remained somewhat self-protective, then, over his own role in contributing to this imposition process.

[178] The professional implications of this adage ('doing what's required of you') should not be overlooked here. As chapter Eight highlights, teachers' ready acceptance of change may implicate them as contributors to their own 'deskilling' (Smyth et al, 2000).

terms of an enhancement of practice and more in terms of an adaptation to change. As Woods et al (1997, p60) put it:

> *"Compliant teachers are adapting, rather than enhancing [..] There is a sense of continuance, survival, even optimism, but not development or enhancement".*

The above point draws into question the true extent to which teachers actually assimilate new job demands. While teachers remained 'subconsciously aware' of such demands, it was largely accepted that these had a limited (often, 'peripheral') effect on real practice (English teacher: Int one, q 1; History HoD: Int two, q 7; Languages teacher: Int one, q 8). Taken as a whole, the sheer amount and inter-competing character of initiatives could also be judged by teachers as counter-productive (see chapter Seven). Thus, in the words of the HoD (history), there was "a limit to which you [could] throw the same fertiliser on the same patch of land" (Int two, q 8). Further, the real impact of initiatives on teachers' practice was largely contingent upon the ability of those who were charged with their implementation to persuade, cajole, energise and/or pressurise others into change (Languages teacher: Int two, q 4, Deputy SENCO: Int two, q 1).

In practical terms, then, many aspects of change (such as those mentioned in section One) were often rejected by teachers on the grounds that their ability to adapt was seriously limited (Connell, 1985). Teacher resistance also manifested itself in the difference between their 'public' and 'private' responses to change (Menter et al, 1997). Thus, for example, much of teachers' responses to the 'raising standards' agenda appeared to support an 'official' stance on school and teacher 'effectiveness',

but in practice reflected (often, tacitly) their rejection of this position. To illustrate briefly, it was noted that the maths teacher privately rejected Ofsted's 'low trust' model of teacher professionalism (Int one, q 8); the HoY 8/9 commented on the private concern that 'raising standards' could be seen as 'very negative' towards certain pupils (Int one, q 8) and; the English teacher spoke about her personal rejection of the 'borderline C' policy in school (Int two, q 1). Finally, the English HoD commented on his adverse reaction to the whole target-setting culture:

> *"This may be counter-productive, but it's important to keep telling yourself that 'this is all a nonsense really - this target setting'. Life goes on despite this and I can't afford to get too worked up about it. This can induce a kind of cynicism - maybe a private cynicism rather than a public one.."* (English HoD: Int one, q 6).

In terms of one 'raising standards' policy, in particular - PRP - there was a unanimous sense of resistance amongst teachers[179]. Here, teachers expressed their concerns about current PRP proposals which appeared to be ill-considered (History HoD: Int two, q 4), and which linked the notion of a 'good teacher' with that of being 'highly paid' (Science HoD: Int two, q 4). Further, there were some who questioned whether this scheme adequately considered within its 'reward system' those teachers who worked predominantly with lower ability pupils (Deputy SENCO, Languages teacher: Int two, q 4). On this point, all the HoDs expressed their concerns about their influential role in allocating varying ability groups to individual teachers. Further, a number of teachers were concerned about the 'divisive' nature of PRP proposals. Specifically, they

---

[179] This may be a reflection of the fact that, as a group, teachers tend to be less 'comfortable' about system goals which are related to 'efficiency or profit' principles (Clarke and Newman: 1997, p99).

pointed to its potentially harmful effects on the school's ethos and on the quality of social relations therein (Maths HoD, PE and science teachers: Int two, q 4).

In adapting to new job demands, teachers seem more likely to experience a number of dilemmas and tensions in their practice rather than simply assimilating (or resisting) change wholesale (Clarke and Newman: 1997, Woods et al: 1997). This observation was prevalent within our case study context. The Headteacher, for example, struggled to present the concept of performance management in a supportive format, particularly in light of the numerous concerns over PRP proposals as described above (Int two, q 4). Likewise, the languages teacher sought to resolve a similar set of dilemmas and tensions as she attempted to positively promote a new peer appraisal scheme in the school (Int two, q 4). While concerns prevailed over performance management issues, it was generally considered that within the new 'audit society' (Power, 1997) teachers 'had to live with' this 'uneasy' aspect of change (DHC: Int two, q 4). Underlying such conciliatory sentiments, however, there was a strong sense that some aspects of reform were more useful than others (Headteacher: Int two, q 5) and that teachers had some agency in making favourable change choices (English teacher: Int one, q1; Int two, q 1). These choices were inevitably curtailed though by certain mandatory job requirements (Languages teacher: Int two, q 1, DHC: Int two, q 5). In such cases where teachers had little leeway, they coped with emergent tensions and dilemmas in various ways:

- *"In the main I cope with getting on with it [..] maybe having a good grumble when I hear there is more to do and it has got to be done. This is not necessarily the most healthy way of working.."* (English HoD: Int two, q 1)

- *"I think inevitably in life there are some things you think 'well I'll go along with that but I don't feel 100% behind it [...] but as long as people say 'look I'll do the best I can with that one but it's not really me'"* (DHC: Int two, q 5)
- *"Sometimes you just go with it and accept it [..] When things come along that we have to do then we do them. I don't think that staff would take things on willingly because the demands are already so high"* (HoY 10/11: Int two, q 5)

This last quote in particular draws attention to the significant problems which teachers face in balancing the compulsory nature of their work with those more voluntary commitments in the job. The resultant compromise in teachers' work space appears central to their ability to adapt to (even, 'survive') change and has a significant impact on their sense of job satisfaction. In addition, this 'balancing act' is likely to have a significant impact on teachers' career choices at work. More research is needed to further illuminate and develop these points.

Reforms are often presented (by government officials and, sometimes, school managers) as being directed towards an increase in teacher 'professionalism'. Accordingly, it is assumed that such 'progressive' change will have (or is bound to have) the unequivocal support of teachers. This section exposes the disputed and 'unreal' nature of this assumption. As demonstrated here, far from being absolute assimilators of change, teachers sometimes act as resistors and indeed, more often than not, are impelled to resolve new tensions and dilemmas which emerge from the proliferation of 'unreal' job demands. Furthermore, the manner in which teachers

respond to the 'raising standards' agenda cannot be standardised as change responses remain highly individualised and invariably mixed. This appears to be the reality of the situation.

Conclusion

This chapter is concerned with the 'unreality' of the 'raising standards' agenda. Specifically, it deals with teachers' concerns about: the non-inclusive character of certain 'raising standards' initiatives; the pervasive gap between theoretical and practical demands and; the perceived need to increasingly exhibit a type of 'image management' in response to change. In addition, teachers' ability to perceive (though not, necessarily, fully articulate) the emergence of this 'unreality' to their work is highlighted via their own personal/professional mediation of change.

The question of how much teachers' 'real' practice is affected by the 'raising standards' agenda is central to this chapter's enquiry. Although teachers' change responses are likely to be highly individualised, it is claimed from the evidence given that a significant amount of practitioners' practice remains *substantially* unaffected. Further, while it is accepted that some 'raising standards' demands are indeed being assimilated into teachers' practice, the degree to which this represents a *real* commitment to change remains in serious question. Accordingly, it is asserted that prior to ascertaining any notion of 'real commitment', one must firstly consider teachers' so-called 'personal/professional factors' in correspondence with 'official' demands made upon their occupational culture. This draws attention then to the possibility that while teachers may be more accountable (and, in due course, may

appear 'positively' responsive towards change), at the same time (or separately) they may be personally/professionally uncommitted to crucial areas of reform.

Chapter Ten: Summary, Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

Discussions presented here review the aims and findings of the study and develop the theoretical analysis used throughout. The chapter then concludes by highlighting the implications of this work for various interested parties, including: policy-makers, practitioners, parents, and researchers.

Review of the aims, findings and theoretical elaboration

The study set out to examine New Labour's educational change programme by investigating the real impact of its 'raising standards' agenda on teachers' work culture. Such an examination was informed by teachers' own perceptions of change events. In placing practitioners' views and concerns at the centre of its research approach, the study made an implicit value judgement about teachers' valuable contribution to the policy-making process. Here, considerable weight was attributed to a subjective dimension to analysis[180]. In order to investigate teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda, four research aims were advanced. These were

[180] This is consistent with a critical policy research approach which questions, what Ball (1994a, p19) refers to as a "privileging of the policy-maker's reality", whereby "..we tend to begin by assuming the adjustment of teachers and context to policy but not of policy to context".

designed to address the six research questions as outlined in chapter Five. Specifically, the research aims set out to[181]:

1. examine how the case study school responded to the 'raising standards' agenda
2. gain an initial insight into teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda, with regards to the meanings they attached to it and their role therein, and their views on the impact of change on their work culture
3. develop this insight into teachers' perceptions by utilising semi-structured interviews and further developing theoretical concepts
4. investigate teachers' concerns about the 'raising standards' agenda and their perceptions of observed changes to notions of self-identity, professional practice and cultural working relationships

The empirical investigation highlighted a number of significant findings. In conjunction with research aims 1 and 2, the analysis of the case study response to the 'raising standards' agenda (Chapter Six) revealed the school's active concern (in light of external pressures) for presenting itself as a 'progressive' organisation. Here, the 'raising standards' agenda was supported through text production (e.g. the school prospectus), which not only endorsed this agenda as 'official', but also energised the school's strategic managerial response. This response manifested itself in a pervasive target-setting culture that advanced a professional re-focus of management-teacher relations and aligned teacher 'effectiveness' criteria with narrowly defined 'outcome'

[181] The following descriptions represent a general summary of the four sets of research aims as set out in chapter Five.

values. In addition, a so-called 'intensification model of learning' was promulgated. It was claimed that, while considerable pressure existed for the school to publicly (and therefore positively) support this new direction, such change could never be seen as absolute. Thus, in exploring aspects of the 'lived' culture of the school, anomalies of practice emerged which ran counter to descriptions of the organisation's 'surface' or 'official' 'raising standards' response. Likewise, teachers' questionnaire responses indicated how their 'official' (and, overwhelmingly, 'positive') perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda might be at variance with a more considered (and often personal) critique of certain aspects of change. This was particularly manifest in teachers' broad and varied definitions of educational 'standards'. In the main, however, teachers endorsed the 'official' promotion of the 'raising standards' agenda and were initially positive about their own role in effecting change at school and classroom levels - though, there were strong suggestions that they had a number of notable concerns.

In conjunction with research aims 3 and 4 above, a closer examination into teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda established how teachers' work culture was significantly affected by New Labour's change programme. To begin with, the empirical research presented corroborated the 'intensification' phenomenon drawing specific attention to the intensity of the 'raising standards' agenda and its considerable negative impact on teachers' work practice (see chapter Seven). In particular, it was shown that teachers perceived the 'raising standards' agenda to be affective in three significant areas - namely, in relation to workload, role accountability, and time demands. Regarding *workload demands*, teachers' concerns related to such issues as the pace of change, 'initiative overload', the 'separateness' of tasks, the competitive

nature of 'raising standards' initiatives, and the 'stop-start' culture which emerged in relation to their implementation. Current attempts to alleviate these concerns were shown to employ a certain 'faith in systems' which appeared to view the 'intensification problem' almost exclusively in terms of a 'managerial solution'. Regarding *accountability demands*, the desire to make teachers' work more transparent was frequently rationalised (from a managerialist perspective) as reflecting 'the current reality of teaching'. In particular, the Headteacher's authority was seen as instrumental in endorsing a new sense of 'role accountability' in the job. Significant concerns, however, were shown to exist among teachers over the sublimation of academic results and the general invalidity of accountability measures. Finally, in relation to *time demands*, it was revealed that the proliferation of administrative responsibilities and tasks (both at middle and classroom management levels) had a considerably negative impact on teaching and learning. Reductions in teachers' 'time space', too, meant that there was a pervasive lack of evaluation of change in school. The comprehensive effects of 'intensification' in all three areas cannot be understated, particularly in light of the harmful impact on teachers' self-identity. The study's treatise of the ill effects of 'intensification' thus served to undermine the effective and cohesive image often associated with a populist 'raising standards' agenda.

Chapter Eight revealed that in promoting the 'raising standards' agenda, New Labour concurrently endorses a new set of professional 'responsibilities' in teaching. This has the effect of pressurising teachers into complying with a complex (and somewhat idealistic) set of rules which govern their professional practice. Consequently, it was claimed that the extent to which teachers feel they can control their own work is seriously diminished. The concept of 'proletarianization' was utilised in this study as a

significant theoretical tool for understanding this diminished capacity, which particularly manifested itself in teachers' classroom work and their social relations in the job. In relation to *classroom teaching*, for example, the 'proletarianization' thesis was evident in the augmented stress on exam-focused work, a loss of classroom creativity, reduced lesson preparation time, and the proliferation of new standardised practices and 'structure'[182]. In relation to teachers' *social relations in the job*, it was shown that teachers felt that there was a diminished opportunity for social/communal conversation with colleagues. Further, a certain formalisation of relations was evident which distinguished itself more expressly in a clear separation of dealings between 'manager and the managed'. Increased control over teachers' work also manifested itself in the 'intensification' of job demands (as discussed earlier). While the issue of control over teachers' work remains both complex and contradictory, this study concluded that there was now a strong trend towards the 'proletarianization' of teaching. This is not to say, however, that this process is absolute. A more measured solution to the question (*are teachers in control of their own work?*) is alleged to lie with the outcomes of "the interplay between structure, agency and culture" (Helsby: 2000, p95).

Chapter Nine set out to explore the 'unreality' of the 'raising standards' agenda. Three themes were identified as exhibiting this 'unreality' phenomenon. The first of these questioned the substantial claims of the *raising standards for all* assumption and concluded that by definition and purpose (and contrary to its 'official' representation), the 'raising standards' agenda follows a more *non-inclusive programme*. The

---

[182] The reader will recall from chapter Eight that some aspects of a more structured approach to teaching, however, may be regarded by teachers as beneficial to their work. Further, 'structure' appears to be less oppressive (in a control sense) since *the ways in which individuals teach* may be

assumption that the quality of teaching and learning are enhanced by the 'raising standards' agenda (DfEE, 1997a) was also questioned in this chapter. Here, it was noted that teachers' 'effectiveness' in the job continues to be too narrowly defined and that a 'culture of passivity' generally exists among pupils in relation to the learning process. The second theme exhibiting this 'unreality' phenomenon drew on the disparity between *theory and practice*, with specific reference to the arrangement and functioning of 'raising standards' initiatives in school. Here, it was revealed that teachers' difficulty in the job was exacerbated by the unfeasible nature of certain work demands. Specifically, it was shown that the unrealistic demands made upon pupils, a general disregard by policy-makers (and, more closely, the SMT) towards a comprehensive evaluation of change, as well as teachers' reduced decision-making capacity, all substantiate the 'impractical' problems of the 'raising standards' agenda. The application and usage of certain 'raising standards' policies was also problematic in this respect. Finally, the third 'unreality' theme (*image management*) highlighted how the school and its teachers were increasingly compelled to 'positively' embrace change. In particular, Ofsted's influence in manipulating this perceived need for 'effective' self-presentation was seen as significant. Everyday practice was affected too with teachers having to demonstrate an increasing concern for how they were perceived at work. It was implied that this 'transparent' commitment to their work could have important implications for their career advancement (or otherwise) within the school organisation.

In relation to these three 'unreality' themes, it was claimed that teachers have the capacity to adjudge (at least to a significant degree) whether changes to their work

---

viewed as a crucial area of teachers' relative autonomy in the professional determination of their work.

appear to be more illusory than assured. Their ability to perceive (though, not necessarily, fully articulate) these 'unreal' changes was confirmed by their personal/professional mediation of change. This mediation process, in turn, was dependent on such factors as their managerial status in the organisation, the degree of cultural support they received in school (particularly at departmental level), their varying stages and breadth of experience, and who they were as individuals. It was concluded that, while teachers assimilate and resist some aspects of change (sometimes, simultaneously), more often than not they are impelled to resolve new tensions and dilemmas which emerge from the proliferation of 'unreal' job demands. From the evidence given, a significant amount of teachers' practice was claimed to have been *substantially* unaffected by the 'unreal' changes to their work.

A critical policy analysis approach formed the *theoretical* framework of the study. This served to focus the investigation (and, specifically, the research aims given above) towards a critique of so-called 'official' conceptions of change. In reviewing the theoretical substance of this work, it was shown that the 'raising standards' agenda is both structurally and ideologically rooted within 'managerialism' and that it is given 'political and pedagogical rationality' by the state's adoption of a certain 'authoritative' perspective on school effectiveness. The ensuing reconstruction of school culture has a significant impact on teachers' work culture. In particular, three conceptual changes were advanced – namely, the *intensification* of labour, the *proletarianization* of teaching, and the proliferation of *unreal* aspects of the job. The research findings confirmed the relevance of these themes in transforming teachers' work culture, though they also questioned some conceptual assumptions within each strand and further connected all three as an integrative force for change. Thus,

throughout the study each theme was separated (largely for the sake of analysis) and inter-related (by examining, for example, aspects of 'cause and effect') at one and the same time. Hence, while 'intensification' needn't be seen as either a sufficient or definitive condition for 'proletarianization', it became clear that it still contributes significantly to a 'deskilling' process. Likewise, while the 'intensification' and 'unreality' theses may be separated by their unique descriptions of teachers' work, the proliferation of bureaucratic tasks continues to expose the illusory claims of a 'new work order' which advance the teacher as a so-called collaborative, self-reliant and flexible worker. Further, schools that appear thoroughly efficient in their "bureaucratic machinery" can be shown to still exhibit "no vital movement, no growth, no life" (Holmes: 1911, pp141,142). In terms of the 'proletarianization' and 'unreality' theses, too, the state's promotion of a new conception of a teacher 'professional' may serve to 'deskill' teachers and simultaneously impel them to adopt, what Rose (1999, p59) calls, "an irreal attitude" to this ideal form.

Taken together, all three themes proffer a greater insight into the impact of the 'raising standards' agenda on teachers' work culture. In relation to the impact of cultural change on aspects of teachers' self-identity, for example, it is recognised that teachers' sense of confidence, purpose, and enjoyment in the job are all likely to be affected by the combination of greater accountability measures, a move towards a low trust model of professionalism, and the obligation to comply (but not necessarily engage) with change. Further, the 'official' promotion of a near-perfect conception of a teacher 'professional' may serve to only induce some form of personal/professional resistance by teachers and, in the long run, provoke negative effects such as exhaustion, cynicism,

or eventual exit from the profession. It is contended here that the 'raising standards' agenda needs to learn from these critical possibilities.

Final Comments

The data presented in chapters Six-Nine indicate the general impact of change on teachers' self-identity, professional practice, and cultural working relationships[183]. The realistic (and somewhat critical) picture painted reflects many negative features of the state of the profession today. Here, job-related stress, teacher disempowerment, as well as poor motivation and morale levels remain prevalent (Evans, 2000). Further, teacher shortages and problems with recruitment and retention are widespread. In the TES's own survey (January 2001), 2,410 full-time permanent vacancies were recorded in less than a quarter of all secondary schools (TES: March 2, 2001). It is thought that if this represented the position in all 3,800 secondary schools, there could be as many as 9,969 unfilled posts in England and Wales (ibid.). While the Secretary of State for Education refused to accept that this constituted a 'crisis' in teacher recruitment, measures to combat prevailing conditions strongly indicated otherwise. These measures included: a teacher recruitment and retention fund worth £35 million in 2001-2 and at least as much in 2002-3; a £2000 'welcome back' bonus for qualified teachers who have been out of the classroom for more than a year; 570 extra places a year for mature career-changers to do their teacher training in schools and; funding for 500 new places on 10-week refresher courses for returnees to teaching (TES: March 16, 2001a). In addition, from April 2001 teachers received a pay rise of at least 3.7

---

[183] The 'general' nature of this research enquiry is confirmed by the study's use of the term 'raising standards *agenda*' which, with its plethora of policy initiatives (see Appendix I), represents a 'common spirit of change'.

per cent above the current inflation rate of 2.9 per cent, with the biggest rises (of nearly 6 per cent above inflation) going to those newest to the profession.

These measures are welcome. However, it is far from certain whether they will be successful in attracting new and returning teachers or, significantly, whether they can stem the steady exodus from the profession. What appears certain is that any strategy which aims to secure a more favourable professional environment must at once consider the views and concerns of practising teachers.

The study furnishes the opportunity for *policy-makers*, in particular, to act upon this point. It is contended here that any 'raising standards' policy that aims to improve both the quality of teaching and learning must necessarily engage those who remain central to its plans. In this way, reform must not be seen as 'something that is done' to teachers and every effort must be made to secure their professional (and genuine) input in the decision-making process. The study also indicates that *teachers* for their part must respond to the 'raising standards' agenda in a much more co-ordinated and strategic manner. This is not easy since their work culture is constantly being reconstructed in the light of global, economic and political pressures. While they may have limited opportunity to 'step outside' their job to consider the real significance of change and their meaningful responses to it, teachers must now begin to critically appraise their current political position as 'practitioners'. Evidence from this study underscores this point and indicates the need for the increased politicisation of the workforce. Such a proposition claims to represent more than just a 'professional' concern for teacher development. In a broader sense, it translates to finding a new direction for democratising the state and civil society as it actively looks for ways of

bringing teachers 'in from the cold'. The underlying rationale for such change is further informed by principles of collaboration and the recognition of the crucial role teachers play in improving 'standards'. Moreover, it is felt that any counter-challenge to the prevailing 'authoritative' culture in education remains dependent upon teachers' ability to tap into new sites of resistance.

Teachers' resistance to change, however, needs to move beyond disquiet for prevailing material factors such as salary and physical working conditions, to other pressing concerns about new job demands and, more generally, the reconstructed nature and focus of schooling. In essence, this means that teachers need to exercise a leading 'pedagogical voice' in the policy-making process. While this proposal ultimately involves teachers becoming self-interested political actors, it must not preclude the possibility for a new partnership with 'others' who lie outside traditional 'professional' alliances. *Parents*' interests, in particular, must be considered in this respect. Within the contemporary economic and political contexts, the 'choice' metaphor has been captured by a neo-liberal rationale which continues to promote parents as informed 'consumers' within the educational market place. In response to this, it remains imperative for teachers and their representatives not only to challenge this image, but also to evoke a new discourse which develops a genuinely alternative partnership with parents. Promoting a public campaign for the understanding of teachers' work is crucial in respect of this challenge[184]. It also remains important to question the prevailing assumptions that market forces drive up 'standards', that parents make 'informed choices' in relation to their child's education, and that they view the new

[184] Such a public campaign for the understanding of teachers' work seems pertinent now given (at the time of writing) the three main teaching unions' (the NUT, NASUWT, and the ATL) stance on joint industrial action against the government's opposition to a 35-hr working week.

reconstruction of school culture as a welcome development[185]. However, in seeking to reach out to other educational 'partners' in this way (which also include students[186], community groups, academic/vocational interests, and members of the business community), it remains important for teachers to balance the need for partnership with the requirement for safeguarding their own professional independence. Thus, as Will Hutton argues:

> *"It is time for educationalists [..] to draw a line in the sand. The task surely is to raise educational standards and intellectual rigour across the system, and central to this ambition is some conception of independence"* (TES: March 16, 2001b).

Parents for their part must acknowledge the importance of 'teacher independence' in this respect and, alongside other 'partners' in the educational process, must begin to question *what can be gained by excluding teachers from the 'raising standards' agenda?*

Researchers too need to address this question. I believe that there is now an urgent need for a more critical social research dimension which develops a deeper understanding of the contemporary challenges which face the teaching profession. This critical dimension has the capacity to illuminate new ways of rethinking the current direction of the 'raising standards' agenda. The study presented seeks to act as a heuristic to this effect. It is limited however, not least due to its 'singular' context

---

[185] Research work at the Cardiff School of Social Sciences (Fitz, J, Gorard, S, and Taylor, C) shows that it remains very difficult to test the claim that market forces have driven up 'standards'. Further, parental choice within so-called 'market areas' remains limited, not least due to factors such as the diverse nature of socio-economic environments and the regulation policies of LEAs (see homepage www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/markets).

(Bassey, 2000) and, particularly, its inadequate consideration of research participants as class-based, ethnic and gendered actors. While there can be no unqualified conclusions, the study does point to the need for further research into teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda. The findings presented could have looked differently had the investigation concentrated on just a few selected 'raising standards' initiatives. This points to the proposal for a more in-depth analysis to investigate teachers' perceptions of particular changes to their work culture. A more comprehensive research proposal could also make use of greater resources to examine the impact of the 'raising standards' agenda on a broad and diverse set of teachers and school settings. Accordingly, such a study could claim to have wider applicability in terms of its empirical findings.

The inter-relationship between all three main transformations to teachers' work culture (highlighted here as the 'intensification', 'proletarianization', and 'unreality' theses) also needs further research attention. In particular, the concept of the 'unreality' of teachers' work needs to be further explored in relation to its impact on teachers' self-identity, the meaning of their work, and the re-alignment of cultural working relations at school. At present, the 'unreality' phenomenon is virtually unexplored in educational research. The 'proletarianization' thesis, too, needs to be re-considered less in terms of the impact of 'intensification' and more in terms of a description of the state's structural and ideological control over new forms of professional identities and practices. Finally, the 'intensification' phenomenon needs to be recognised and understood in terms of its *contemporary* effects on teachers' work culture and, particularly, in relation to the plethora of 'raising standards' initiatives which now

---

[186] In conjunction with the need for a public campaign for the understanding of teachers' work, I believe that there is a concurrent need to make explicit students' current experiences in school. Both

prevail. By considering all three themes as an integrative force for change, the challenge remains for researchers to further illuminate the bigger theoretical picture and, in conjunction with the emergence of new empirical insights, advance our understanding of the complexity of teaching.

In concluding this work, it would be unfair to judge New Labour's 'raising standards' policy approach wholly in negative terms. Certainly, the level of commitment which this government has shown to education is significant (particularly 'outside' of the secondary sector in the area of early years education and the *focus* on literacy and numeracy at primary level). This is matched also by a sizeable long-term financial commitment to the educational sector as a whole (DfEE, 2001)[187]. Moreover, New Labour continues to commit itself to some form of vision for state schooling – though it should be stated that this vision has become reoriented on the perceived grounds that the prevailing system is inherently flawed[188].

However, while the government may signify 'a better option' for *some* of those theoreticians and practitioners who continue to keep faith in state schooling and who vehemently oppose Tory plans for 'setting schools free', it should not be immune from critique. Attempts to improve 'standards' in our schools may be said to be 'working' (e.g. TES: February 9, 2001) but, besides the obvious contentions about this claim[189], we must also recognise the 'cost of practical policy'. Thus, as Hargreaves (1994a, p12) points out:

---

promotions remain intrinsically linked.

[187] This is despite concerns that in its first term of office New Labour only matched the previous Conservative government's spending on education under John Major.

[188] The government's belief that the current state system is flawed was exemplified recently by Alistair Campbell's (the Prime Minister's official spokesman) remarks about 'bog-standard' comprehensives (TES: February 16, 2001).

[189] There was no real evidence from the case study, for example, to test this claim.

"To ask whether a new method [or policy] is practical is therefore to ask much more than whether it works. It is also to ask whether it fits the context, whether it suits the person, whether it is in tune with their purposes and whether it helps or harms their interests. It is these things that teachers' desires concerning change are located; and it is these desires that change strategies must address".

The 'cost' of the 'raising standards' agenda is clearly evident in this study. While teachers were shown to welcome the 'raising standards' focus *in principle*, considerable concerns remained over the manner in which it was conceived, the ways in which it was effected in school, and the meanings attached to its outcomes. The onus is now on the government to listen to the teachers.

References

Abbs, P (1994): *The Nature of Socratic Learning* (London and Washington, The Falmer Press)

Abraham, J (1996): Positivism, Prejudice and Progress in the Sociology of Education: who's afraid of values? (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp 81-85)

Acker, S (1999): *The Reality of Teachers' Work: Never a Dull Moment* (London and New York, Cassell)

Alvesson, M (1993): *Cultural Perspectives on Organizations* (New York, Cambridge University Press)

Apple, M (1982a): *Education and Power* (Boston, London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Apple, M (1982b): *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education - essays on class, ideology and the state* (London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Apple, M (1986): *Teachers and Texts - A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education* (New York and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Apple, M (1993): *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age* (New York, Routledge)

Apple, M (1997): The New Technology: Is it Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem in Education? Cited in N Selwyn (2000): The Discursive Construction of the National Grid for Learning (*Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 26, No. 1)

Apple, M (2000): Preface Introduction in Smyth et al (eds: 2000, pp xi-xv)

Apple, M W and Weis, L (eds, 1983): *Ideology and Practice in Schooling* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press)

Apple, M W and Jungck, S (1992): You Don't Have to Be a Teacher to Teach this Unit: Teaching, Technology and Control in the Classroom in A Hargreaves and M G Fullan (eds, 1992: Ch 3)

Avis, J (1996): The Myth of the post-Fordist Society in J Avis et al (1996): *Knowledge and Nationhood* (London, Cassell)

Ball, S J (1983): Case Study Research in Education: Some Notes and Problems in M Hammersley (ed, 1983): *The Ethnography of Schooling: Methodological Issues* (Driffield, Nafferton)

Ball, S J (1990a): *Politics and Policy Making in Education - explorations in policy sociology* (London and New York: Routledge)

Ball, S J (1990b): *Markets, Morality and Equality in Education* (London, Hillgate Group - Paper 5, the Tufnell Press)

Ball, S J (1990c): Education, Inequality and School Reform: Values in Crisis! (An Inaugural Lecture, King's College, University of London)

Ball, S J (1993): Culture, Cost and Control: Self-Management and Entrepreneurial Schooling in England and Wales in J Smyth (ed, 1993): *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School* (Basingstoke, Falmer Press). Cited in S Robertson (1997, p 657)

Ball, S J (1994a): *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-Structural Approach* (Buckingham, Open University Press)

Ball, S J (1994b): Education Policy, Power Relations and Teachers' Work in S Ball (ed, 1994a: pp 48-64)

Ball, S J (1997a): Good School/ Bad School: Paradox and Fabrication (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp 317-336)

Ball, S J (1997b): Policy Sociology and Critical Social Research: a personal review of recent education policy and policy research (*British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 3)

Ball, S J (1998): Comprehensive Schooling, Effectiveness and Control: an analysis of educational discourses in R Slee (ed, 1998): *Discipline and Schools* (London, MacMillan). Cited in Thrupp (1999, p 20)

Ball, S J and Goodson, I (eds, 1985): *Teachers' Lives and Careers* (London and Philadelphia, The Falmer Press)

Barber, M (1997): *The Learning Game* (London, Indigo)

Bassey, M (2000): Case Study Research - Challenge and Potential (Speech given at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol: November 9, 2000)

Bates, R (1992): Educational Reform: Its Role in the Economic Destruction of Society (Paper presented at the Australian Association of Research in Education and New Zealand Association of Research in Education, Nov 22-26, Geelong, Victoria, Australia)

Bell, C (1995): In a Different League? (*British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment* Vol. 5, No. 3)

Benn, C and Chitty, C (1997): *Thirty Years On: Is Comprehensive Education Alive and Well or Struggling to Survive* (London and New York: Penguin books)

Bernard, H R (1994): *Research Methods in Anthropology* (London, Sage)

Bernstein, B (1975): *Class, Codes and Control Vol. 3 - towards a theory of educational transmissions* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Bernstein, B (1977): *Class Codes and Control* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Biddle, B, J, Good, T, L and Goodson, I F (eds, 1997): *International Handbook of Teachers and Teaching* (Dordrecht, Boston and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers)

Black, P (1995): Ideology, Evidence and the Raising of Standards (The Second Annual King's Education Lecture: King's College London, July 11, 1995)

Blackmore, J, Bigum, C, Hodgens, J and Laskey, L (1996): Managed Change and Self-Management in Schools of the Future (*Leading and Managing*: Vol. 2, No. 3, pp 195-220). Cited in G Whitty, S Power, and D Halpin (1998, pp 68,69)

Blase, J (ed, 1991): *The Politics of School Life in Schools* (New York, Sage)

Boaler, J, Wiliam, D and Brown, M (1998): *Students' Experiences of Ability Grouping - Disaffection, Polarisation and the Construction of Failure.* Cited in TES (Aug 28: 1998, p7)

Bogdanor, V (1979): *Standards in Schools* (National Council for Educational Standards, Kay-Shuttleworth Papers on Education, No. 1)

Bottery, M (1996): The Challenge to Professionals from the New Public Management: implications for the teaching profession (*Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp 179-197)

Bottery, M (1999): Education Under the New Modernisers: an agenda for centralisation, illiberalism and inequality? (*Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp 103-120)

Bourdieu, P (1986): *The Forms of Capital* (translated by Richard Nice) in J G Richardson (ed): *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (1986, Greenwood Press). Cited in Halsey et al (1997, Ch 2)

Bowe, R and Ball, S J (1992): *Reforming Education and Changing Schools: Case Studies in Policy Sociology* (London, Routledge). Cited in Simkins (2000, p 323)

Braverman, H (1974): *Labor and Monopoly Capital - the degradation of work in the twentieth century* (New York and London, Monthly Review Press)

Broadfoot, P (1996): *Education, Assessment and Society: A Sociological Analysis* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Broadfoot, P (1998): Assessment and Lifelong Learning (presentation at the CLIO Conference on 'Lifelong Learning', Bristol University: March 5, 1998)

Broadfoot, P and Osborn, M with Gilly, M and Bucher, A (1993): *Perceptions of Teaching: Primary School Teachers in England and France* (London, Cassell)

Brown, M (1988): Issues in Formulating and Organizing Attainment Tragets in Relation to their Assessment in H Torrance (ed, 1988): *National Assessment and Testing: A Research Response* (Kendal, British Educational Research Association)

Brown, P and Lauder, H (1997): Education, Globalisation, and Economic Development in A H Halsey, H Lauder, P Brown and A S Wells (eds, 1997: Ch 10): *Education - Culture, Economy and Society* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press)

Brown, P, Halsey, A H, Lauder, H and Wells A S (1997): The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction. in Halsey et al (1997, Introduction)

Brown, S and McIntyre, D (1993): *Making Sense of Teaching* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Busher, H and Saran, R (eds, 1995): *Managing Teachers as Professionals in Schools* (London and Philadelphia, Kogan Page)

Calderhead, J (1987): *Exploring Teachers' Thinking* (London, Cassell)

Campbell, J and Neill, S R (1994a): *Primary Teachers at Work* (London and New York, Routledge)

Campbell, J and Neill, S R (1994b): *Curriculum Reform at Key Stage One* (Harlow, Longman)

Carspeken, P F (1996): *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research – A Theoretical and Practical Guide* (New York and London: Routledge)

Case, P, Case, S, and Catling, S (2000): Please Show You're Working: A Critical Assessment of the Impact of Ofsted Inspection on Primary Teachers (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp 612-621)

Cerny, P G (1997): Paradoxes of the Competition State: The Dynamics of Political Globalization (*Government in Operation*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp 251-274)

Chia, J and Walker, A (1992): Putting the Case for the Case Study (*Singapore Journal of Education*, Vol. 12, No. 1)

Child Poverty Action Group (1993): *Poverty: the Facts* (London, Carey Openheim)

Clarke, C and Peterson, P (1986): Teachers' Thoughts and Processes in M C Wittrock (ed, 1986): *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd Edition: New York, MacMillan). Quoted in Calderhead (1987, pp 21,22)

Clarke, J and Newman, J (1997): *The Managerial State - power, politics and ideology in the remaking of social welfare* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications)

Clarke, K (1991): Primary Education - a statement (Text of a statement made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, December 3, 1991: London, DES). Cited in Woods et al (1997, p 3)

Coffield, F (1997): Can the UK Become a Learning Society? (The Fourth Annual Lecture at Kings College, University of London: June, 1997)

Cohen, L and Manion, L (1994): *Research Methods in Education - Fourth Edition* (London and New York, Routledge)

Coleman, W O (1995): *Rationalism and Anti-Rationalism in its Origins of Economics. The Philosophical Roots of 18th Century Economic Thought* (England and the USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd)

Connell, R W (1985): *Teachers' Work* (Sydney, London, Boston: George Allen and Unwin)

Constable, H (1995): Developing Teachers as Extended Professionals in H Busher and R Saran (1995, Ch 9)

Cooper, P and McIntyre, D (1996): *Effective Teaching and Learning: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives* (Buckingham, Open University Press). Cited in Woods et al (1997)

Cortazzi, M (1991): *Primary Teaching How It Is: A Narrative Account* (London, David Fulton). Cited in S Acker (1999, p 75)

Covington, M V (1996): The Myth of Intensification (*Educational Researcher*, Vol. 25, No. 8, pp 24-27)

Cox, R (1991): *The Global Economy and Social Choice* (Quebec, McGill-Queens University Press). Cited in S Robertson (1997, p 634)

Cox, R with T Sinclair (1996): *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

Creemers, B P M (1994): The History Value and Purpose of School Effectiveness Studies in D Reynolds et al (1994): *Advances in School Effectiveness Research and Practice* (Oxford, Pergamon). Cited in Sammons et al (1995, pp 5,6)

Dale, R (1986): Perspectives on Policy-Making in *Introducing Education Policy: Principles and Perspectives* (Course E333, Open University)

Dale, R (1989): *The State and Education Policy* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Dale, R (1997): The State and the Governance of Education: An Analysis of the Restructuring of the State-Education Relationship *in* Halsey et al (1997, Ch 17)

Davies, B and Hentschke, G C (1994): School Autonomy: Myth or Reality - Developing an Analytical Taxonomy (*Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp 96-103)

Day, C (1997): Teachers in the Twenty-First Century: Time to Renew the Vision. Quoted in A Hargreaves and R Evans (1997, p 44)

Day, C (2000): Stories of Change and Professional Development – the costs of commitment in Day et al (2000, Ch 7)

Day, C, Fernandez, A, Hauge, T E and Moller, J (2000): *The Life and Work of Teachers - international perspectives in changing times* (London and New York, The Falmer Press)

Denscombe, M (1980): The Work Context of Teaching: an analytic framework for the study of teachers in classrooms (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp 279-292)

Denscombe, M (1998): *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press)

Denscombe, M (2000): Social Conditions for Stress: Young People's Experience of Doing GCSEs (*British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp 359-374)

Densmore, K (1987): Professionalism, Proletarianization and Teacher Work in T S Popkewitz (ed, 1987): *Critical Studies in Teacher Education - Its Folklore, Theory and Practice* (London, New York and Philadelphia: The Falmer Press)

Derber, C (ed, 1982): *Professionals as Workers: Mental Labour in Advanced Capitalism* (Boston, MA, G K Hall). Cited in Densmore (1987, p 151)

DES (1997a): *Teaching and Higher Education Bill*

DES (1997b): *School Standards and Framework Bill*

DES (1983): *Teaching Quality* (Cited from Nias: 1989, p 14)

DES Inspectorate of Schools (1977): *Ten Good Schools: a secondary school enquiry* (London, HMSO). Quoted in Sammons et al (1995, p 25)

Dewey, J (1909): *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process* (Chicago, Henry Regnery). Second edition 1933 (Boston, DC Heath). Cited in Southworth (1994, p 54)

Grantham, D W (1971): What did the Progressivists Achieve? The Progressive Era and the Reform Tradition in D M Kennedy (ed:1971, p 11): *Progressivism: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company)

DfEE (1997a): *Excellence in Schools* (White Paper)

DfEE (1997b): *Raising Standards for All - the government's legislative plans*

DfEE (1997c): *Connecting the Learned Society – National Grid for Learning*

DfEE (1998a): *Teachers - Meeting the Challenge of Change* (Green Paper)

DfEE (1998b): *Lifelong Learning - A Consultation Document* (The Labour Party)

DfEE (1998c): *The Learning Age - a renaissance for a new Britain*

DfEE (1998d): *Reducing the Bureaucratic Burden on Teachers* (DfEE News, *http://www.open.gov.uk/dfee/burden/*)

DfEE (1998e): Byers 'Names and Acclaims' as 73 Schools Celebrate Success (DfEE News, Feb 2: *http://www.coi.gov.uk/coi/depts/*)

DfEE (1999a): *Learning to Succeed - a new framework for post-16 learning*

DfEE (1999b): *Meet the Challenge - Education Action Zones*

DfEE (1999c): *Teachers - taking forward the challenge of change* (Response to the Consultation Exercise)

DfEE (2000a): Blunkett sets out radical new agenda for inner city school diversity and improvements (DfEE News, http://www.dfee.gov.uk/news/)

DfEE (2000b): *Professional Development - Support for Teaching and Learning* (Consultation Document)

DfEE (2001): *Schools Building on Success – raising standards, promoting diversity, achieving results* (Green Paper)

Docking, J (ed, 2000): *New Labour's Policies for Schools - raising the standard?* (London, David Fulton Publishers)

Doyle, W (1986): Content Representation in Teachers' Definitions of Academic Work (*Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp 365-379)

du Gay, P (1996): *Consumption and Identity at Work* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Sage Publications)

During, S (ed, 1993): *The Cultural Studies Reader* (London and New York, Routledge)

Dworkin A G (1997): Coping with Reform: The Intermix of Teacher Morale, Teacher Burnout, and Teacher Accountability in Biddle et al (eds: 1997, Ch 13)

Elliott, J (1996): School Effectiveness Research and its Critics: alternative visions of schooling (*Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp 199-224)

Evans, L (2000): The Effects of Educational Change on Morale, Job Satisfaction and Motivation (*Journal of Educational Change*: Vol. 1, No. 1, pp 173-192)

Fairclough, N (2000): *New Labour, New Language?* (London, Routledge)

Fairly, J and Patterson, L (1995): Scottish Education and the New Managerialism (*Scottish Educational Review*, Vol. 27, pp 13-36). Cited in Trowler (1998, p 93)

Finlayson, A (1999): Third Way Theory (*The Political Quarterly Publishing Co Ltd*, Oxford UK and Malden USA)

Foster, J (1996): In Pursuit of World Standards (*T.H.E. Journal*: Jan 1996, pp 57-59)

Foucault, M (1981): *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (Harmondsworth, Penguin)

Freire, P (1996): *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London, Penguin Books - revised edition)

Fullan, M and Hargreaves, A (1992): *What's Worth Fighting For In Your School?* (Buckingham, Open University Press)

Fullan, M with S Stiegelbauer (1991): *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (London, Cassell: New York, Teachers College Press)

Fullan, M (1999): *Change Forces: The Sequel* (Philadelphia, Falmer Press)

Furlong, J (1998): Educational Research: Meeting the Challenge (Inaugural Speech given at the University of Bristol April 30, 1998)

Gamble, A and Kelly, G (1996): Making the Best of Thatcherism (Article written for the *New Statesman*: October 4, 1996)

Gerwitz, S (1996): Post-Welfarism and the Reconstruction of Teachers' Work (Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Conference, Lancaster University, 12-15 September). Cited in Woods et al (1997, pp 49,50)

Gerwitz, S, Ball, S and Bowe, R (1995): *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education* (Buckingham, Open University Press)

Giddens, A (1984): *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge, Polity). Cited in K Jones (1996, p 3)

Giddens, A (1996): There is a Radical Centre Ground. (Article written for the *New Statesman*: November 29, 1996)

Giddens, A (1998): *The Third Way - the renewal of social democracy* (Cambridge; Oxford; Malden, USA: Polity Press)

Gillborn, D (1998): Racism, Selection, Poverty and Parents (*Journal of Educational Policy* Vol. 13, No. 6, pp 717-735)

Gilroy, P and Wilcox, B (1997): Ofsted, Criteria and the Nature of Social Understanding: A Wittgensteinian Critique of the Practice of Educational Judgement (*British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp 22-38)

Gintis, H (1980): Theory, Practice and the Discursive Structure of Education (Paper given to the *International Sociology of Education Conference*, Westhill College 3-5 January). Cited in Broadfoot (1996, p 76)

Gipps, C V (1993): Policy Making and the Use and Misuse of Evidence in B Simon and C Chitty (eds, 1993): *Education Answers Back* (London, Lawrence and Wishart). Cited in Helsby (1999, p 46).

Gipps, C, Brown, M, McCallum, B and McAllister, S (1995): *Intuition or Evidence? Teachers and National Assessment of Seven-Year-Olds* (Buckingham, Open University Press)

Giroux, H (1997): *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture and Schooling. A Critical Reader* (Oxford and Colorado, Westview Press)

Goldstein, H (1999): On School Effectiveness (Speech given at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol: January 13, 1999)

Gomes, A (2000): The Cardoso Government's Project for Higher Education: Procrustean Solutions in the Management of Change? (Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol: unpublished thesis)

Goodson, I (1992): Sponsoring the Teachers' Voice: Teachers' Lives and Teacher Development in A Hargreaves and M G Fullan (eds, 1992: Ch 7)

Goodson, I (2000): Professional Knowledge and the Teacher's Life and Work in Day et al (eds: 2000, Ch 1)

Grace, G (1978): *Teachers, Ideology and Control: A Study in Urban Education* (London, Henley and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Grace, G (1991): The State and the Teachers. In G Grace and M Lawn (eds, 1991): *Teacher Supply and Teacher Quality, Issues for the 1990s* (Exeter, Multilingual Matters, pp 6-18). Cited in S Robertson (1997, p 631)

Grace, G (1995): *School Leadership - Beyond Education Management. An Essay in Policy Scholarship* (London and Washington D C, The Falmer Press)

Green, A (1990): *Education and State Formation - the rise of education systems in England, France and the USA* (New York, St Martin's Press)

Green, A (1997): *Education Globalization and the Nation State* (UK, MacMillan Press Ltd: USA, St Martin's Press)

Guardian Education Supplement (Dec 9, 1997): Centralism Rules OK? (Article contribution from Robert Skidelsky)

Guardian Education Supplement (March 31, 1998): An Eye on the Prize (Article written by Donald MacLeod, p 4)

Guardian Education Supplement (February 13, 2001): Special Effects (Article written by Phil Revell, pp 2,3)

Habermas, J (1972): *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Translated by Jeremy J Shapiro: London, Heinemann Educational)

Habermas, J (1976): *Legitimation Crisis* (London, Heinemann)

Hackett, G (1998): Researchers' Warning on National Targets (TES, October 24, 1998). Cited in Whitty (1998, p 12)

Hall, V and Southworth, G (1997): Headship (*School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp 151-170). Cited in Simkins (2000, p 322)

Halsey, A H, Lauder, H, Brown, P and Wells A S (eds, 1997): *Education - Culture, Economy and Society* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press)

Hamilton, D (1994): Clockwork Universes and Oranges (paper presented at the BERA Conference, Oxford: September, 1994). Cited in Elliott (1996, p 217)

Hamilton, D (1998): The Idols of the Market Place in R Slee, G Weiner with S Tomlinson (eds: 1998, Ch 2)

Hammersley, M (1990): *Reading Ethnography Research: A Critical Guide* (London, Longmans)

Hargreaves, A (1992a): Time and Teachers' Work: An Analysis of the Intensification Thesis (*Teachers College Record*, Vol. 94, No. 1, pp 87-108)

Hargreaves, A (1992b): Cultures of Teaching: A Focus for Change in A Hargreaves and M G Fullan (eds: 1992, Ch 12)

Hargreaves, A (1994a): *Changing Teachers, Changing Times - teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age* (London, Cassell)

Hargreaves, A (1994b): Restructuring Restructuring: Postmodernity and the Prospects for Educational Change. Taken from *Journal of Educational policy*, 9 (1994) in Halsey et al (1997, Ch 23)

Hargreaves, A (1999): Foreword to S Acker (1999): *The Reality of Teachers' Work: Never a Dull Moment* (London and New York, Cassell)

Hargreaves, A and Evans, R (eds, 1997): *Beyond Educational Reform: Bringing Teachers Back In* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Hargreaves, A and Fullan, M G (eds, 1992): *Understanding Teacher Development* (London, Cassell: New York, Teachers College Press)

Hargreaves, D (1995): School Culture, School Effectiveness and School Improvement (*School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp 23-46)

Harris, K (1990): Teachers: Really Taking Control of Schools (*Education Links*, Vol. 38, pp 21-25)

Hartley, D (1998): Repeat Prescription: The National Curriculum for Initial Teacher Training (*British Journal of Educational Studies*: Vol. 46, No. 1, pp 68-83). Cited in Helsby (1999, p 150)

Hartz, L (1955): *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World)

Harvey, L (1990): *Critical Social Research* (London, Boston, Sydney, and Wellington: Unwin Hyman)

Hatcher, R (1994): Market Relationships and the Management of Teachers (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*: Vol. 15, No. 1, pp 41-61). Quoted in Menter et al (1997, p 96)

Hatcher, R (1996): The Limitations of the New Social Democratic Agendas. In R Hatcher and K Jones (eds): *Education after the Conservatives* (Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham Books)

Hatcher, R (1998): Labour, Official School Improvement and Equality (*Journal of Educational Policy* Vol. 13, No.4, pp 485-499)

Hatcher, R and Jones K (eds, 1996): *Education After The Conservatives: The response to the new agenda of reform* (Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham Books)

Hay McBer (2000): Research into Teacher Effectiveness - A Model of Teacher Effectiveness (A research report commissioned by the DfEE, No. 216)

Held, D (1989): *Political Theory and the Modern State* (Cambridge, Polity). Cited in Green (1997, p 154)

Held, D, McGrew, A, Goldblatt, Percaton, J (1999): *Global Transformations* (Cambridge, Polity Press)

Helsby, G (1999): *Changing Teachers' Work - the reform of secondary schooling* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Helsby, G (2000): Multiple Truths and Contested Realities: The Changing Faces of Teacher Professionalism in England in Day et al (2000, Ch 6)

Hextall, I and Mahony, P (1998): Effective Teachers for Effective Schools in R Slee, G Weiner with S Tomlinson (eds, 1998)

Hirst, P and Thompson, G (1995): Globalization and the Future of the Nation State (*Economy and Society* Vol. 24, No. 3, pp 408-442)

Hitchcock, G and Hughes, D (1989): *Research and the Teacher - a qualitative introduction to school-based research* (London and New York, Routledge)

HMSO (1998): *The School Standards and Frameworks Act* (London, HMSO)

Hobsbawm, E J (1994): *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London, Michael Joseph). Cited in Green (1997, p 576)

Hofstadter, R (1955): *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York, Vintage Books)

Holmes, E (1911): *What Is and What Might Be* (London, Constable). Quoted in G Grace (1978, p 27): *Teachers, Ideology and Control: A Study in Urban Education* (London, Henley and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul)

Hood, C (1991): *The New Public Sector Management* (London, Routledge)

Hopkins, D (1994): School Improvement in an ERA of change in E Burridge and P Ribbins (eds, 1994): *Improving Education - Promoting Quality in Schools* (London, Cassell)

Hoyle E (1983): The Professionalization of Teachers: A Paradox in P Gordon (ed, 1983): *Is Teaching a Profession?* (London, Institute of Education publication)

Hoyle, E (1974): Professionality, Professionalism and Control in Teaching (*London Education Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp 13-19)

Hoyle, E (1995): Changing Conceptions of a Profession in H Busher and R Saran (1995, Ch 4)

Hoyle, E and John, P (1995): *Professional Knowledge and Professional Practice* (London, Cassell)

Hughes, C and Tight, M (1995): The Myth of the Learning Society (*British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3, pp 290-304)

Hutton, W (1996): *The State We're In* (London, Vintage Books)

Hutton, W (1997): *The State To Come* (London, Vintage Books)

Ireson, J (1999): Raising Standards: Is Ability Grouping in Secondary Schools the Answer? (Speech given at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol: March 1, 1999)

Jackson, P W (1968): *Life in Classrooms* (US Holt, Rhinehart and Winston Inc.)

Jephcote, M, Salisbury, J, Fletcher, J, Graham, I, and Mitchell, G (1996): Principals' Responses to Incorporation: A Window on their Culture (*Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp 34-48). Cited in Simkins (2000, p 322)

Jessop, B (1999): The Changing Governance of Welfare: Recent Trends in its Primary Functions, Scale, and Modes of Coordination (*Social Policy and Administration*, Vol. 33, No. 4, pp 348-359)

Jones, K (1996): Cultural Politics and Education in the 1990s in R Hatcher and K Jones (eds, 1996): *Education After The Conservatives* (Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham Books)

Jupp, V (1996): Documents and Critical Research in R Sapsford and V Jupp (eds: 1996, Ch 12): *Data Collection and Analysis* (London: Sage Publications)

Kagan, D M (1992): Implications of Research on Teacher Belief (*Educational Psychologist*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp 65-90)

Kennedy, D M (ed, 1971): *Progressivism - The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company).

Kenway, J (1992): Marketing Education in the Post-Modern Age (Paper presented to the AARE Conference San Francisco). Cited in A Green (1997, p 576)

Kolko, G (1973): *The Triumph of Conservatism* (New York, The Free Press)

Kumar, K (1988): The Post-Modern Condition. in Halsey et al (1997, Ch 5)

Kyriacou, C (1986): *Effective Teaching in Schools* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd)

Labour Party (1989): *Children First - Labour's Policy for Raising Standards in Schools* (Straw, Fatchett, Armstrong and Smith: Labour Party publication)

Labour Party (1991): *Raising the Standard - Labour's plans for an education standards commission* (Jack Straw MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education: The Labour Party, June 1991)

Labour Party (1995): *Diversity and Excellence: A New Partnership for Schools* (London, The Labour Party)

Labour Party (1997): *Labour Manifesto* (London, John Smith House, published by the Labour Party)

Laclau, E (1990): *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London, Verso). Cited in P du Gay, (1996, p 2)

Langford, G (1978): *Teaching as a Profession: An Essay in the philosophy of Education* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)

Larson, S M (1980): Proletarianization and Educated Labour (*Theory and Society*, Vol. 9, pp 131-175). Cited in A Hargreaves (1992a, p88)

Lauder, H and Yee, B (1987): Are Teachers being Proletarianised? Some Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Issues. In S Walker and L Barton (eds, 1987): *Changing Policies, Changing Teachers* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, pp 58-71)

Lauder, H, Jamieson, I and Wikeley, F (1998): *Models of Effective Schools*: Limits and Capabilities in Slee, Weiner and Tomlinson: (1998, Ch 5)

Lauglo, J (1995): Forms of Decentralisation and Their Implications for Education (*Comparative Education Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp 5-29)

Lawn, M and Ozga, J (1986): Unequal Partners: Teachers Under Indirect Rule (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp 225-238). Cited in Smyth et al (2000, p 11)

Lawn, M and Ozga, J (1988): The Educational Worker? A Reassessment of Teachers. In J Ozga (ed, 1988): *Schoolwork: Approaches to the Labour Process of Teaching* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, pp 81-98)

Levin, B (1993): Students and Educational Productivity (*Education Policy Analysis Archives* Vol. 1, No. 5, http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa/v1n5.html)

Lortie, D C (1975): *School Teacher - A Sociological Study* (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press)

Lubove, R (1959): The Twentieth Century City: The Progressive as Municipal Reformer (*Mid-America*, XLI: Oct 1959, p 206) in D M Kennedy (1971, p 206)

MacBeath, J (1997): The Challenge of Learning (Presentation at ACE Conference, http://www.internetnorth.com.au/aceconference97/macbeath.htm)

Marginson, S (1993): *Education and Public Policy in Australia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). Cited in Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998, pp 37,38)

McCaig, C (2001): New Labour and Education, Education, Education. In S Ludlam and M J Smith (eds, Ch 10): *New Labour in Government* (New York and Basingstoke, MacMillan Press)

McCulloch, G (2000): The Politics of the Secret Garden - teachers and the school curriculum in England and Wales in Day et al (2000, Ch 2)

McLaughlin, M W and Yee, M S (1988): School As A Place To Have A Career in Lieberman, A (ed, 1988: Ch 2): *Building A Professional Culture In Schools* (New York, Teachers College Press)

McMahon, A (1999): Teacher Stress, Pupil Learning and Schools (Seminar given at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol: Feb 23, 1999)

Meadows, S (1998): Children Learning to Think: Learning From Others? Vygotskian Theory and Educational Psychology (*Education and Child Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 2)

Menter, I, Muschamp, Y and Ozga, J (1995): Public Collusion, Private Trouble: the discursive practices of managerialism and their impact on primary teachers (Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, Bath: 14-17 September, 1995). Cited in Woods et al (1997, p 144)

Menter, I, Muschamp, Y, Nicholls, P and Ozga, J with Andrew Pollard (1997): *Work and Identity in the Primary School* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Mercer, N (1995): *The Guided Construction of Knowledge - talk amongst teachers and learners* (Clevedon, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multilingual Matters Ltd)

Merson, M (2000): Teachers and the Myth of Modernisation (*British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp 155-169)

Mills, C Wright (1959): *The Sociological Imagination* (New York, Oxford University Press)

Molnar, A (1996): *Giving Kids the Business: the Commercialization of America's Schools* (Boulder, CO; Westview Press). Cited in Whitty (1998)

Morgan, G (1986): *Images of Organization* (California, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications)

Mortimore, P and Whitty, G (1997): *Can School Improvement Overcome the Effects of Disadvantage?* (London, Institute of Education)

Mouffe, C (ed, 1979): *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul). Cited in Apple (1982b, p 3)

Muschamp, Y, Menter, I, Nicholls, P, Ozga, J and Pollard, A (1995, April): The Market and the School: Confidences about the Real Work of Teachers (Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco). Cited in S Robertson (1997, p 622)

Nachmias, C F and Nachmias, D (1996): *Research Methods in the Social Sciences – Fifth Edition* (London, New York, Sydney, and Auckland: St Martins Press)

Neave, G (1988): On the Cultivation of Quality, Efficiency and Enterprise: an overview of recent trends in higher education in Western Europe, 1968-1988 (*European Journal of Education*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp 7-23)

New Statesman (Oct 23, 1998): Do School Tests Lower Standards? (Article written by Tony Mooney)

Nias, J (1989): *Primary Teachers Talking - A Study of Teachers as Work* (London and New York, Routledge)

O'Brien, S (1998): Equity in Education - Implications of the 'Standardisation' of Standards (Paper presented at the Perceptions of Equality Conference, University of Hertfordshire: October 31st, 1998)

O'Brien, S (1999): New Labour, New Approach? Exploring Tensions Within Educational Policy and Practice (*Education and Social Justice*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp 18-27)

Oakeshott, M (1967): *Rationalism in Politics: Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London, Methuen)

Offe, C (1984): *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. Edited by John Keane (London, Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland: Hutchinson)

Offe, C (1985): *Disorganized Capitalism: Contemporary Transformations of Work and Politics* (edited by John Keane (1985)

Ohmae, K (1990): *The Borderless World* (London, Collins)

Ohmae, K (1995): Putting Global Logic First (*Harvard Business Review* Jan/Feb, 1995, pp 119-125)

Osborne, D and Gaebler, T (1992): *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley). Cited in Clarke and Newman (1997, p 21)

Ozga, J (1987): Part of the Union: School Representatives and Their Work in M Lawn and G Grace (eds, 1987): *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work* (Lewes, Falmer Press)

Ozga, J (1995): Deskilling a Profession: Professionalism, Deprofessionalism and the New Managerialism in Busher and Saran (1995, Ch 2)

Ozga, J and Lawn, M (1981): *Teachers' Professionalism and Class* (Lewes, Falmer Press)

Ozga, J and Lawn, M (1988): Schoolwork: Interpreting the Labour Process of Teaching (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp 323-336)

Paquette, J (1998): Equity in Educational Policy: A Priority in Transformation or in Trouble (*Journal of Educational Policy*, Vol. 13, No. 1)

Pheysey, D C (1993): *Organisational Cultures - Types and Transformations* (London and New York, Routledge)

Phillips, D C (1989): Subjectivity and Objectivity: an objective inquiry. In E Eisner and A Peshkin (eds, 1989): *Qualitative Inquiry in Education* (New York, Teachers College Press)

Pieterse, J N (1995): *Globalization as Hybridization* (London, Sage) in M Featherstone, S Lash and R Robertson (eds): *Global Modernities* (London, Sage). Cited in Green (1997, p 155)

Plewis, I and Goldstein, H (1998): Excellence in Schools - a Failure of Standards (*British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment*, 8, 1, 17-20). Cited in Whitty (1998)

Pollard, A (1982): A Model of Classroom Coping Strategies (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp19-37). Cited in J Nias (1989, p 44)

Pollard, A, Broadfoot, P, Croll, P, Osborn, M and Abbott, D (1994): *Changing English Primary Schools? - The Impact of the Education Reform Act at Key Stage One* (London, Cassell)

Pollitt, C (1993): *Managerialism and the Public Services: cuts or cultural change in the 1990s* (Oxford, Blackwell). Cited in Trowler (1998, pp 93,94)

Portsmouth, R and Caswell, J (1988): The Myth About 'Achieving Potential' (*British Journal of Special Education*: Vol. 15, No. 1)

Power, M (1997): *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

Power, S and Whitty, G (1998): Market Forces and School Culture in J Prosser (ed, 1998): *School Culture* (UK, Paul Chapman Publishers)

Power, S, Halpin, D and Whitty, G (1997): Managing the State and the Market: 'new' education management in five countries (*British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4, pp 342-362). Cited in Simkins (2000, p 330)

Rafferty, F (1994): Alarm at Growth of 60-Hour Week (*Times Educational Supplement*, August 5, 1994). Cited in Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998, p 67)

Randle, K and Brady, N (1997): Managerialism and Professionalism in the 'Cinderella Service' (*Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, Vol. 49, pp 121-139). Cited in Trowler (1998, p 93)

Rea, J and Weiner, G (1998): Cultures of Blame and Redemption - When Empowerment Becomes Control: Practitioners' Views of the Effective Schools Movement in Slee, Weiner and Tomlinson (1998, Ch 3)

Reich, R (1991): *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (London, Simon and Schuster). Cited in Power and Whitty (1998)

Reynolds, D (1998): Wanted: Reliable Self-Starters (Article in the *TES School Management Section*: July 17, 1998)

Reynolds, D and Creemers, B (1990): School Effectiveness and School Improvement: A Mission Statement (*School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp 1-3)

Ribbins, P and Burridge, E (1994): *Improving Education - Promoting Quality in Schools* (London, Cassell)

Robertson, R (1991): Social Theory, Cultural Relativity and the Problem of Globality. in A D King (ed): *Culture, Globalization and the World System* (London, MacMillan). Cited in Power and Whitty (1998)

Robertson, R (1995): Globalisation: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity in M Featherstone, S Lash and R Robertson (eds): *Global Modernities* (London, Sage). Cited in Green (1997, p 156)

Robertson, S (1996): Teachers' Work, Restructuring and Post-Fordism: Constructing the New Professionalism in I Goodson and A Hargreaves (eds, 1996): *Teachers' Professional Lives* (London, Falmer Press)

Robertson, S (1997): Restructuring Teachers' Labor: 'Troubling' Post-Fordisms in Biddle et al (eds: 1997, Ch 17)

Robertson, S (1999): Strip Away the Bark. Expose the Heartwood. Get to the Heart of the Matter: Re/regulating Teachers' Labour in New Zealand (*New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp 121-132)

Robertson, S (2000): *A Class Act - Changing Teachers' Work, the State, and Globalisation* (New York and London, Falmer Press)

Robertson, S and Chadbourne, R (1998): Banning Voluntary Labour: a study of teachers' work in the context of changing industrial relations regimes (*Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, Vol. 19, No. 1)

Robinson, P (1996): Separating Myth and Substance (*Training Tomorrow*, Vol. 10, No. 3)

Rosario, J R (1986): Excellence, School Culture, and Lessons in Futility: Another Case Against Simplistic Views of Educational Change (*Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp 31-43)

Rose, N (1989): *Governing the Soul - the shaping of the private self* (London and New York, Routledge)

Rose, N (1999): *Powers of Freedom - reframing political thought* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

Rosenholtz, S (1989): *Teachers' Workplace* (New York, Longman)

Rutter, M, Maughan, B, Mortimore, P and Ouston, J (1979): *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children* (London, Open Books)

Sammons, P and Reynolds, D (1997): A Partisan Evaluation - John Elliott on School Effectiveness (*Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp 123-136)

Sammons, P, Hillman, J and Mortimore, P (1995): Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: a review of school effectiveness research (Published for Ofsted, April 1995)

Sammons, P, Thomas, S and Mortimore, P (1997): *Forging Links: Effective Schools and Effective Departments* (London, Paul Chapman Publishing)

Sapsford, R and Jupp, V (eds, 1996): *Data Collection and Analysis* (London, New Delhi: Open University Press)

Schick, A (1996): *The Spirit of Reform: Managing the New Zealand State Sector in a Time of Change* (A Report for the State Services Commission and the Treasury, New Zealand; Wellington, State Services Commission). Cited in S Robertson (1999, p 231)

Schön, D (1983): *The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action* (New York, Basic Books)

Schön, D (ed, 1991): *The Reflective Turn: case studies in and on educational practice* (New York and London, Teachers College Press)

Senge, P (1990): *The Fifth Discipline* (New York, Doubleday). Cited in C Day (1997, p58): Teachers in the Twenty-First Century: Time to Renew the Vision in A Hargreaves and R Evans (1997, Ch 4)

Shavelson, R J and Steen, P (1981): Research on Teachers' Pedagogical Thoughts, Judgements, Decisions and Behaviour (*Review of Educational Research* , Vol. 51, No. 4, pp 455-498)

Silverman, D (1996): *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction* (London, Sage Publications)

Simkins, T (2000): Education Reform and Managerialism: Comparing the Experience of Schools and Colleges (*Journal of Education Policy*: Vol. 15, No. 3, pp 317-332)

Slavin, R E (1996): *Education for All* (Lisse, Swets and Zeitlinger).

Slee, R (1995): *Changing Theories and Practices of Discipline* (UK, USA: The Falmer Press)

Slee, R, Weiner, G with S Tomlinson (eds, 1998): *School Effectiveness for Whom? - Challenges to the School Effectiveness and School Improvement Movements* (UK and USA, The Falmer Press)

Smyth, J, Dow, A, Hattam, R, Reid, A and Shacklock, G (2000): *Teachers' Work in a Globalizing Economy* (London and New York, The Falmer Press)

Soucek, V (1994): Flexible Education and New Standards of Communicating Competence in J Kenway (ed, 1994): *Economising Education: Post-Fordist Directions* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press). Cited in Menter et al (1997, pp 22,23)

Southworth, G (1994): The Learning School in P Ribbins and E Burridge (1994, Ch 5): *Improving Education - Promoting Quality in Schools* (London, Cassell)

Strain, M and Field, J (1997): On the Myth of the Learning Society (*British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2)

Strathern, M (2000): The Tyranny of Transparency (*British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp 309-321)

STRB (1999): School Teachers' Review Body Eighth Report (Chairman: Tony Vineall, Feb 1999)

Stringfield, S (1995): Attempting to Enhance Students' Learning Through Innovative Programs: The Case for Schools Evolving into Higher Reliability Organizations (*School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp 67-96)

Stringfield, S (1996): Teacher Effectiveness (Talk given at a South Gloucestershire school: March, 1996)

Stringfield, S (1998): Research on High Reliability Organizations: Implications for School Effects Research, Policy, and Educational Practice (Article distributed to participating schools in the HRS project)

Stronach, I and Morris, B (1994): Polemic Notes on Educational Evaluation in the Age of 'Policy Hysteria' (*Evaluation and Research in Education*, Vol. 8, Nos. 1-2, pp 5-19)

Sunday Times (March 19, 2000): Class Warrior (*Sunday Times Magazine*: article written by Lesley White, p 39)

Sutherland, S (1994): Raising Standards in Education (First Annual Lecture, King's College London: July, 1994)

Taylor, S, Fazal, R, Lingard, B and Henry, M (1997): *Educational Policy and the Politics of Change* (London and New York, Routledge).

TES (Feb 20, 1998): Success Takes Just Three (Article written by Margaret Hodge)

TES (June 26, 1998a): A Radical Approach to Raising Standards (Article written Estelle Morris)

TES (June 26, 1998b): No Shame in Setting High Targets (article written by Michael Barber, p 17)

TES (July 3, 1998): End this Obscene Inequality (Article written by Roy Blatchford)

TES (July 17, 1998): Wanted: Reliable Self-Starters (School Management Section, article written by Mark Whitehead)

TES (Oct 23, 1998): 'Inspections Push Standards Down' (Article written by David Budge)

TES (Jan 8, 1999): Blunkett is not the PM's creature (Article written by Stephen Pollard - extract taken form Blunkett's autobiography 'On a Clear Day')

TES (August 13, 1999): Can Good Teaching be Measured? (Article written by David Reynolds and Sheila Lawlor)

TES (August 27, 1999): Shades of Grey in Teacher Skills Debate (Letter written to the TES by Martyn Hammersley, p 15)

TES (March 17, 2000): Whitehall Kills Off Classroom Creativity (Article written by Jon Slater, p 12)

TES (May 12, 2000): 'Simply the Best: At a Price (article written by Nicolas Barnard, p 4)

TES (June 16, 2000): Revealed: The Ideal Teacher (Article written by Nicolas Barnard, News Section, p 5)

TES (June 23, 2000a): Model Teachers Offer 'Blueprint' (Article written by Nicolas Barnard, p 6)

TES (June 23, 2000b): Recipe Still To Be Tested (Opinion Section, p 16)

TES (Oct 20, 2000): Let Your Pupils do the Talking (Article written by Ted Wragg, p 48)

TES (November 3, 2000): Good Schools at Risk of Sliding - slimmer inspections criticised (Article written by Warwick Mansell, p 5)

TES (November 3, 2000): Tips on Flogging Dead Horses (Article written by Ted Wragg, p 48)

TES (November 17, 2000): Heads Set to Take Back Power from Governors (Article written by Amanda Kelly and Karen Thornton, p 10))

TES (January 12, 2001): Teachers Keep Faith With Labour (Article written by Clare Dean, p 3)

TES (February 9, 2001): The Best Set of Inspections Ever (Article written by Warwick Mansell, p 6)

TES (February 16, 2001): Secondaries Modernised (Opinion Section, p 14)

TES (March 2, 2001): Desperately Seeking 10,000 Teachers (Article written by Clare Dean, Warwick Mansell, and Karen Thornton: TES News, p 3)

TES (March 16, 2001a): Corrupted by the Wheels of Industry (Article written by Will Hutton: Opinion Section, p 19)

TES (March 16, 2001b): Toughing it Out (Article written by Clare Dean: TES News, p 4)

The Times (June 23, 2000): Teachers Plan Action as Pay Rise Beckons (Article written by John O Leary)

Thrupp, M (1999): *Schools Making a Difference: Let's be Realistic!* (Buckingham, Open University Press)

Troman, G (2000): Teacher Stress in the Low-Trust Society (*British Journal of Sociology of Education*: Vol. 21, No. 3, pp 331-353)

Trow, M (1994): Managerialism and the academic profession: the case of England (*Higher Education Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp 11-18). Cited in Trowler (1998, p 94)

Trowler, P (1998): What Managerialists higher education credit frameworks and managerialist ideology (*International Studies in Sociology of Education*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp 91-109)

Troyna, B (1994): Critical Social Research and Educational Policy (*British Journal of Educational Studies* Vol. 42: No.2, pp 70-84) in Taylor et al (1997, p 38)

Tyack, D (1990): Restructuring in Historical Perspective: Tinkering Toward Utopia *(Teachers College Record*, 192/2:170-91). Cited in A Hargreaves (1994b, p 339)

Tyack, D and Cuban, L (1995): *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). Cited in Helsby (1999, p 25)

Usher, R and Edwards, R (1994): *Postmodernism and Education: Different Voices, Different Worlds* (London, Routledge)

Varlaam, A, Nuttall, D and Walker, A (1992): *What Makes Teachers Tick?: A Survey of Teacher Morale and Motivation* (London School of Economics, Centre for Educational Research). Cited in Campbell and Neill (1994a, p 222)

Waller, W (1932): *The Sociology of Teaching* (New York, Russell and Russell Inc.). Published as a Science Editions paperback, 1965 (London and Sydney: John Wiley and Sons Inc)

Watkins, P (1993): Pushing Crisis and Stress Down the Line: The Self-Managing School. In J Smyth (ed, 1993): *A Socially Critical View of the Self-Managing School* (Basingstoke, Falmer Press). Cited in S Robertson (1997, p 658)

Webb, R and Vulliamy, G (1996): A Deluge of Directives: Conflict Between Collegiality and Managerialism in the post-ERA (Coventry, *University of Warwick Research Papers in Continuing Education*). Cited in Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998, p 57)

Weiner, B (1983): Some Thoughts and Feelings. In S G Paris, G M Olson and H W Stevenson (eds, 1983): *Learning and Motivation in the Classroom* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum)

Welch G and Mahony P (2000): The Teaching Profession in J Docking (ed, 2000: Ch 9)

Wells, G (1998): Knowledge: Transmission or Co-Construction? (Speech given at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol: June 17, 1998)

Westbrook, K C and Seay, B M (1992): Obscuring Problem Definition: Changing Metaphors, Choice and Educational Policy (Paper presented at the *American Education Research Association*, San Francisco, April 1992)

Whitty, G (1998): New Labour, Education and Disadvantage (Text of a lecture given by Geoff Whitty at the Department of Applied Social Studies and Social Research, University of Oxford on 24th February, 1998)

Whitty, G, Power, S and Halpin, D (1998): *Devolution and Choice in Education* (Buckingham and Philadelphia, Open University Press)

Wiebe, R H (1967): *The Search for Order, 1877 - 1920* (New York, Hill and Wang)

Wild, P and King, P (1999): Education and IT Policy: Virtual Policy? in J Demaine (ed, 1999): *Education Policy and Contemporary Policy* (Basingstoke, MacMillan)

Wilmott, H (1993): Strength is Ignorance; Slavery is Freedom: managing culture in modern organisations (*Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp 515-552). Cited in Helsby (1999, p 41).

Woodhead, C (1995): *A Question of Standards: Finding the Balance* (Politeia - a forum for social and economic thinking)

Woodhead, C (1996): *Chief Inspector's Annual Report* (London, Ofsted). Cited in Woods et al (1997, p 3)

Woods, P (ed, 1980): *Teacher Strategies: Explorations in the Sociology of the School* (London, Croom Helm)

Woods, P Jeffrey, B, Troman, G and Boyle, M (1997): *Restructuring Schools, Reconstructing Teachers - Responding to Change in the Primary School* (Buckingham: UK, Bristol: USA)

Wylie, C (1994): *Self Managing Schools in New Zealand: the Fifth Year* (Wellington, New Zealand Council for Educational Research). Cited in Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998, p 74)

Yin, R K (1984): *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (London, Sage)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: A List of 'Raising Standards' Initiatives
(taken as a whole these initiatives form the 'raising standards' agenda)

- Lunchtime/After-school clubs
- Widespread pupil ability setting
- Revision classes
- Pastoral Merit system
- Termly pupil assessment
- AST ('superteacher') scheme
- Departmental schemes of work
- Homework clubs
- Homework policy scheme
- Easter/Summer school classes
- Pupil numeracy assessments in lower school
- Parental contracts
- School numeracy policy
- School literacy policy
- School discipline policy
- School 'specialisation' schemes
- Mini post-Ofsted inspections
- Pupil work experience scheme
- Private sponsorship schemes
- Setting school academic 'targets'
- Record of Achievement scheme
- Regular parent-teacher meetings
- Departmental displays of 'excellent' work
- Teacher Appraisal scheme
- Pupil mentoring
- Monitoring pupils' planners/diaries
- Targeting 'underperforming' GCSE students
- Regular provision of 'classroom support' staff
- Pupil performance/target setting schemes
- Regular movement between pupil ability sets
- Pupil literacy assessments in lower school
- Subject-based Merit system
- Use of computers in the classroom
- Monitoring departmental academic performances
- Teacher IT literacy programmes
- Regular monitoring of key stage 3 results
- NQT induction programme
- Regular monitoring of Key stage 4 results
- Written pupil reports
- Pupil IT literacy programmes
- Mini pre-Ofsted inspections
- Community education programmes
- Monitoring school attendance rate

note: Some of these initiatives have always been in practice in schools, others have been introduced or have intensified under New Labour's administration. Various 'raising standards' initiatives from this list are identified as practice within the case study school. This 'working' list is then given to teachers as evidence of 'raising standards' in their school. Since it is not possible to comment on each of these in detail, teachers are asked about the general impact of such a 'raising standards' *agenda* on school culture. Subsequently, the investigation focuses on teachers' perceptions of the impact of this agenda on notions of self-identity, professional practice and cultural working relationships.

APPENDIX II: The Questionnaire Schedule

(1 of 7)

[A copy of the Headteacher Questionnaire is given as an exemplar - the same questions are asked of other participants but are obviously tailored to their role positions]

Purpose of Questionnaire

"It is now time to get to the heart of raising standards - improving the quality of teaching and learning" - DfEE (1997) *Excellence in Schools*

Are we currently getting to the 'heart' of 'raising standards'?; What do 'standards' really mean?; and what effects are various 'raising standards' initiatives having on teachers? My study wishes to examine important aspects of these questions. The value and importance of *teachers'* own views and explanations remain central to this enquiry.

The following code system is used in parts of this questionnaire. Please answer each question by *circling the number* which most closely represents your opinion using this 5 point scale:

5 SA = Strongly Agree
4 A = Agree
3 DK = Don't Know
2 D = Disagree
1 SD = Strongly Disagree

It is important to stress that all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the school nor the individual will be identified in the project report.

This questionnaire consists of ten questions. Please answer every question. Any further comments or explanation may be added to the back of this questionnaire.
The time you take out of your busy schedule to respond to these questions is very much appreciated.

Cover Sheet Information

Name of school: .....

LEA: .....

Name: .....

Are you male or female? (please delete as appropriate)

Male / Female

Type of school: e.g. Middle, 11-16, 11-18, VI form college:

.....

Mixed or single sex? .....

Status of school (please circle appropriate option):

Maintained / Voluntary Aided / Grant Maintained / Voluntary Controlled

Current number of pupils on roll: .....

Total number of teachers (NOT including the Head):

Full-Time: ..... Part-Time: ..... NQTs: .....

Catchment area of the school? (please circle appropriate option):

Inner City / Mainly Urban / Mainly Rural / Rural and Urban

Percentage of pupils with English as a second language: .....

Percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals: .....

How many sites does the school operate on? .....

How many years have you been Headteacher at this school? .....

Were you appointed head from inside or outside the school? (please circle appropriate option):

From Inside / From Outside

How many headships, including this one, have you held? .....

How many years in total have you been in teaching? .....

Do you teach in your present school? (please tick): Yes ☐ No ☐

If **yes**, *what subject(s) do you teach?*

.....

Headteacher Questionnaire						Code
1. Within your school:						
	Please Circle					
	SA	**A**	**DK**	**D**	**SD**	
• teachers have high expectations of pupil achievement	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• the majority of teachers engage in 'whole class' teaching	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• pupils play an active part in the life of the school	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• academic attainment is high	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• there is a strong focus on 'raising standards'	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• a main aim of this focus is to achieve good academic results	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• most staff understand the school's aim in 'raising standards'	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• most staff agree with the school's aim in 'raising standards'	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• staff are involved in developing policy initiatives aimed at 'raising standards'	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
• most staff have a shared sense of purpose in relation to the development of these policy initiatives	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with these two statements? (please circle):						
a. ***As Headteacher, I do actively promote the 'raising standards' agenda in my school***	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
b. ***As Headteacher, I do actively promote the 'raising standards' agenda in the classroom***	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	
3. Briefly, what do educational 'standards' mean to you?						

4. The following list highlights some policy initiatives aimed at 'raising standards' in the *school*. Place a tick next to those which have been adopted (or are about to be adopted) by your school? [NB: *this is <u>not</u> given as a checklist to 'good practice'*]

Parental contracts ☐	**Monitoring departmental academic performances ☐**
School numeracy policy ☐	**Teacher IT literacy programmes ☐**
School literacy policy ☐	**Regular monitoring of key stage 3 results ☐**
School discipline policy ☐	**NQT induction programme ☐**
Mini post-Ofsted inspections ☐	**Regular monitoring of Key stage 4 results ☐**
***Pupil work experience scheme* ☐**	**Written pupil reports ☐**
Private sponsorship schemes ☐	**Pupil IT literacy programmes ☐**
Setting school academic 'targets' ☐	**Mini pre-Ofsted inspections ☐**
Record of Achievement scheme ☐	**Community education programmes ☐**
Regular parent-teacher meetings ☐	**Monitoring school attendance rate ☐**

Please specify other policy initiative(s) adopted (or about to be adopted) in the interest of 'raising standards' in your *school*:

.....

.....

5. How do you (as Headteacher) promote the 'raising standards' agenda in the *school*?

6. The following list highlights some policy initiatives aimed more directly at 'raising standards' in the *classroom*. Place a tick next to those which have been adopted (or are about to be adopted) by your school? [NB: *this is <u>not</u> given as a checklist to 'good practice'*]

Lunchtime/After-school clubs ☐
Widespread pupil ability setting ☐
Revision classes ☐
Pastoral Merit system ☐
Termly pupil assessment ☐
AST ('superteacher') scheme ☐
Departmental schemes of work ☐
Homework clubs ☐
Homework policy scheme ☐
Easter/Summer school classes ☐
Pupil numeracy assessments in Year 7 ☐
Departmental displays of 'excellent' work ☐
Teacher Appraisal scheme ☐
Pupil mentoring ☐
Monitoring pupils' planners/diaries ☐
Targeting 'underperforming' GCSE students ☐
Regular provision of 'classroom support' staff ☐
Pupil performance/target setting schemes ☐
Regular movement between pupil ability sets ☐
Pupil literacy assessments in year 7 ☐
Subject-based Merit system ☐
Use of computers in the classroom ☐

Please specify other policy initiative(s) adopted (or about to be adopted) by your school in the pursuit of 'raising standards' in the *classroom*:

.....

.....

7. How do you (as Headteacher) promote the 'raising standards' agenda in the *classroom*?

8. Please circle the appropriate response in relation to each of the following statements:

	SA	A	DK	D	SD
a. ***The policy initiatives (described in questions 4 and 6) have raised the profile of 'standards' in my school***	5	4	3	2	1
b. ***This focus on 'raising standards' leads to improvements in pupil learning***	5	4	3	2	1
c. ***Classroom teaching is positively influenced by the focus on 'standards' in my school***	5	4	3	2	1
d. ***There is considerable pressure on pupils to achieve higher 'standards'***	5	4	3	2	1
e. ***Within the contemporary context, effective teaching means achieving high academic outcomes***	5	4	3	2	1
f. ***The pursuit of 'raising standards' is an important aspect of teaching***	5	4	3	2	1

9. Has the focus on 'raising standards' significantly influenced your job as Headteacher? [please tick]

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

If you have answered *yes* to the above question, can you briefly describe which aspects of your job have been significantly influenced by the 'raising standards' agenda?

If you have answered *No* or *Unsure*, briefly explain this response

10 a. "*The focus on 'raising standards' is a welcome initiative*". To what extent do you agree/disagree with this statement? (please circle)

SA	A	DK	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

b. Do you have any concerns about the 'raising standards' initiative? Please comment:

IF NECESSARY, PLEASE USE THE BACK PAGE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/EXPLANATION

PLEASE PLACE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED AND SEAL IT. KINDLY RETURN BY POST

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX III: Interview Schedule One
(1 of 2)

[A copy of one classroom teacher's schedule is given as an exemplar - the same questions are asked of other participants but are obviously tailored to their role positions and to their previous questionnaire responses]

Teacher Interview

TP = Teachers' Perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda

T1 - T3 = Specifically linked to the Thematic topics of the study

Question	*Theme*
1. You mentioned in the questionnaire that the focus on 'raising standards' has significantly influenced your job as a teacher. Principally, you mentioned that there is now a much greater emphasis on monitoring pupils and setting them targets. How do you feel about your 'new role' in this respect?	**TP**
2. Do you have concerns about the 'raising standards' agenda i.e. the drive to improve both teacher standards and pupil academic standards? Can you identify what you think is the core problem with the current 'raising standards' agenda?	**T1/T2/T3**
3. There are a number of policies currently in practice at your school which are associated with the 'raising standards' agenda... [SHOWING A LIST OF RS INITIATIVES AT LEE VALLEY SCHOOL].... Looking at these initiatives as a whole, how do you think they are affecting your school culture [anticipated prompt: i.e. the way things are done in the school]	**TP**
4. On a personal level, do you think that the focus on 'raising standards' (and the initiatives associated with this agenda) affects the level of stress you experience in the job?	**T1**
5. How is your classroom teaching affected by the focus on 'raising standards'?	**T1/T2/T3**
6. How has the focus on 'raising standards' affected staff relations in your school? [anticipated prompt: how has the focus on 'raising standards' affected your dealings with the SMT/teacher colleagues?]	**T2/T3**
7. How do you think teacher-pupil relations have been affected by the focus on 'raising standards'?	**T1/T3**
8. The focus of 'raising standards', according to the present government, is on improving the *quality* of teaching and the *quality* of learning in schools. In your personal/professional view do you think that these initiatives are achieving these aims?	**T2/T3**
9. How do you manage the workload demands of the 'raising standards' agenda?	**T1**
10. a) At present, how would you describe your level of job satisfaction? **b) If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?**	**TP**

APPENDIX III (continued)

List of Raising Standards Initiatives [linked to question 3 of the interview schedule]

- School numeracy policy
- School literacy policy
- Setting school academic 'targets'
- Record of Achievement scheme
- Lunchtime/After-school clubs
- Revision classes
- Departmental schemes of work
- Homework policy scheme
- Easter/Summer school classes
- Regular movement between pupil ability sets
- Use of computers in the classroom
- Subject-based Merit system
- Pupil performance/target setting schemes
- Pupil mentoring
- Monitoring departmental academic performances
- Regular monitoring of Key Stage 3 results
- Regular monitoring of Key Stage 4 results
- Pupil IT literacy programmes
- Monitoring school attendance rate
- Departmental displays of 'excellent' work
- Monitoring pupils' planners/diaries
- Targeting 'underperforming' GCSE students
- CAT scores
- YELLIS tests

APPENDIX IV: Interview Schedule Two
(1 of 4)

[A copy of the Head of Year's schedule is given as an exemplar - the same questions are asked of other participants but are obviously tailored to their role positions and to their previous interview one responses]

HoY 8 / 9 (Second Interview)

T1 - T3 = Specifically linked to the main Thematic topics of the study

TP = Teachers' Perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda

Question	*Theme*
1. A number of concerns about the 'raising standards' agenda were highlighted in the last set of interviews [see separate sheet which outline these]. **a) Do you share these concerns?** **b) How do you think teachers cope with these concerns in their everyday practice?**	**TP**
2. From the last set of interviews it was noted that 'raising standards' has affected teaching in a number of ways [see separate sheet which highlights some of these points]. **a) How do you think teachers feel about these changes to their teaching?**	**T2**
3. Do you think teachers have become more *or* less professional? Can you explain this response?	**T2**
4. How do you think teachers feel about proposals that link notions of 'teacher effectiveness' with exam results? (I'm thinking in particular here about the PRP issue)	**T2**
5. It was mentioned in the last set of interviews that the sheer volume of initiatives, and the constraints on teachers' time, mean that it's impossible for teachers to fully participate in the 'raising standards' agenda. What appears is a clear separation between those who formulate 'raising standards' initiatives and those who implement them. **a) Do you share this perception?** **b)What effect do you think this separation of functions has on staff relations?**	**T2/T3**
6. [show 'raising standards' card] **a) Do you use most of these strategies to promote learning in the classroom?** **b) As a consequence of these, do you think pupils are more *or* less independent in the learning process?**	**T3**
7. The image of teaching, it seems, is being transformed. Are you happy with the direction of this change?	**TP/T2/T3**
8. Many teachers are concerned about the intensification of the 'raising standards' agenda - the amount of work, the levels of accountability, reduced levels of time for preparing lessons etc. **a) Do you share these concerns?** **b) Do you think anything can be done to alleviate such problems?**	**T1**

APPENDIX IV (continued)

Some concerns about the Raising Standards agenda which were highlighted in the last set of interviews **[linked to question 1 of the interview schedule]**

- There is too much emphasis on academic outcomes. As a consequence:

  - the professional development of teachers suffers

  - there's excessive pressure on pupils and teachers to 'succeed'

  - education may be viewed upon in terms of crude measurements

  - different year group's results are compared despite the variability of pupil intake cohorts

- Increased expectations (of teachers and pupils) can be unrealistic and there is a danger that a ceiling effect may arise - how far can we keep improving?

- Raising Standards risks alienating lower ability pupils

- The Raising Standards Agenda involves initiative overload

APPENDIX IV (continued)

Raising Standards has affected teaching in a number of ways **[linked to question 2 of the interview schedule]**

- Teachers are now much more aware of the syllabus

- They're under greater pressure to get through schemes of work

- Teachers have less time for exploratory work in lessons

- They must increasingly deliver sharply focused lessons which are exam-related

APPENDIX IV (continued)

Do you use most of these Raising Standards initiatives to promote learning in the classroom?

[linked to question 6 of the interview schedule]

- **School numeracy policy**
- **School literacy policy**
- **Setting school academic 'targets'**
- **Record of Achievement scheme**
- **Lunchtime/After-school clubs**
- **Revision classes**
- **Departmental schemes of work**
- **Homework policy scheme**
- **Easter/Summer school classes**
- **Regular movement between pupil ability sets**
- **Use of computers in the classroom**
- **Subject-based Merit system**
- **Pupil performance/target setting schemes**
- **Pupil mentoring**
- **Monitoring departmental academic performances**
- **Regular monitoring of Key Stage 3 results**
- **Regular monitoring of Key Stage 4 results**
- **Pupil IT literacy programmes**
- **Monitoring school attendance rate**
- **Departmental displays of 'excellent' work**
- **Monitoring pupils' planners/diaries**
- **Targeting 'underperforming' GCSE students**
- **CAT scores**
- **YELLIS tests**

APPENDIX V: Overview of the Research Design

MAIN RESEARCH AIM

('To examine teachers' perceptions of the 'raising standards' agenda')

↓

RESEARCH	RESEARCH	RESEARCH	RESEARCH
AIM 1	AIM 2	AIM 3	AIM 4
↓	↓	↓	↓

(the research questions highlighted in bold refer to specific areas of research attention[190])

RESEARCH	RESEARCH	RESEARCH	RESEARCH
QUESTIONS 1,2,3	QUESTIONS 2,3,4,5	QUESTIONS 2,3,4,5	QUESTIONS 5, 6
↓	↓	↓	↓

RESEARCH METHODS

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

↓

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

---

[190] The research questions given here correspond to the same numbered questions given in chapter Five i.e. research question 1 refers to *how does the case study school respond to the challenges of the 'raising standards' agenda?*, research question 2 refers to *what does the 'raising standards' agenda mean to teachers in this setting?*, and so on. When the research question is highlighted in bold it means that that particular question formed the main basis for developing and operationalising a specific research method.

APPENDIX VI: The Teacher Sample Group

	Role Position	Gender	Category of Experience
1	Headteacher	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
2	DHC	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
3	HoD (Mathematics)	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
4	HoD (English)	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
5	HoD (Science)	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
6	HoD (History)	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
7	HoY 8/9	Male	5-10 years teaching experience
8	HoY 10/11	Male	15-30 years teaching experience
9	Deputy SENCO	Female	15-30 years teaching experience
10	English teacher (and literacy co-ordinator)	Female	5-10 years teaching experience
11	Maths teacher (and recently appointed Deputy Head of Department)	Female	Less than 5 years teaching experience
12	Languages teacher (and co-ordinator of peer appraisal scheme)	Female	5-10 years teaching experience
13	PE teacher	Female	5-10 years teaching experience
14	Science teacher	Female	15-30 years teaching experience